



**Window
on
Jordan**

To read or not read!

By Ibtisam Awadat

Special to The Star

ARE YOU a good reader? What was the last book you read? Are we considered as a reading nation? "I used to read before sleeping. Recently, I am reading a book about literature," said Amal, a state employee. "Fortunately, I was raised up in an educated family which highly appreciates books. So I must read something or I will feel that something is missing from my day," she added.

But, "reading" is not always a daily exercise. Many people wish to make it so but there is always something standing in the way.

"I like reading. I have plenty of time since I am unemployed, however, I can not afford to buy all the books I like," said Fedaa Mohammad, a recent university graduate. "We don't have many public libraries, and the price of books are very expensive."

One reason why people don't read as much as they used to is because of the effect of modern technology. According to surveys most people spend at least two hours watching television. Others spend it playing computer games. But, according to experts, these media are not less important in providing us with knowledge and information.

"Such media, while not a substitute for the book,

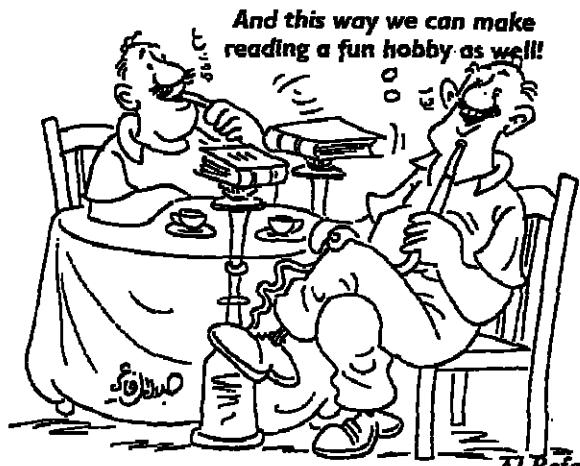
can urge people to read," Mr. Fakhri Kassar, a prominent writer and President of the Jordanian Writers Association, said.

To encourage people to go back to the book, a group of intellectuals initiated "The National League to Encourage Reading (NLER)." The society was established in April 1996.

"Our goal is to give more consideration to the readable text," said lawyer Taleb Al Sakka, president of the NLER. "We are trying to expand the concept of the 'readable text,'" Mr. Al Sakka added.

Mr. Sakka said that the NLER membership is

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Al Refai

The Star

**Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly**

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

● **Leith Chbeilat:**
«Nous n'avons pas
de gouvernement»

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AMMAN, 19 - 25 FEBRUARY 1998, VOLUME 8, NUMBER 38, 350 FILS

Baghdad: US claims ring hollow

By Roula Khalaf

BAGHDAD—Down the alleys of Shorjah, a Baghdad market dating back to Ottoman days, the soft smell of spices and plentiful food lends a false sense of peaceful times.

But the traders' solemn faces betray anxiety. Behind colorful bags offering everything from sugar to tomato paste, the traders stand idly by, waiting for the occasional customer. There's no more panic or stocking up on food as in other crises. People are used to war, says a trader. All there is, is uncertainty.

As Iraq's showdown with the UN reaches a critical stage, the people of Baghdad are pinning their hopes for a peaceful end to the crisis: over access for United Nations weapons inspectors on Kofi Annan, the UN secretary-general, who is attempting to arrange a deal.

But, having lived through war or sanctions for nearly 20 years—the eight-year conflict with Iran in the 1980s, followed by the 1990-1991 Gulf War, then the United Nations embargo—they face the threat of military strikes with resignation.

"We have learned to be ready for war," says 32-year-old Ali, who buys and sells Iranian-made tomato paste in the market. "We've known nothing but war, so there is no more fear, we are used to seeing missiles land on us and bombs explode."

"There is an old Iraqi saying," adds a public employee standing nearby: "You can't be afraid of rain when you're already wet."

Ali's friend, Jassem, two weeks ago dutifully headed President Saddam Hussein's call for a "jihad" or holy war and joined the volunteer force to help fight the Americans. He knows he can

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Annan attempts last minute diplomatic rescue Clinton spells out case for bombing Iraq

By John F. Harris and
John M. Goshko

WASHINGTON—UN Secretary General Kofi Annan confirmed that he is planning to visit Baghdad on Friday. His trip follows an agreement by the United States and the five other permanent members of the Security Council Tuesday on a potential compromise that Annan can offer Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Under this plan, administration officials said, the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) teams that conduct inspections would be accompanied by what in effect would be diplomatic chaperones, chosen by Annan, when visiting Saddam's presidential palaces.

US officials said the UNSCOM inspectors would be allowed to go where they want, when they want, and would be accompanied by diplomats only when visiting presidential residences. Earlier Tuesday, Clinton administration officials described themselves as unenthusiastic about the prospects for successful diplomacy by Annan. But after a telephone conversation between Clinton and Annan, as well as a meeting between Annan and diplomats for the permanent Security Council members, White House officials said his trip held promise.

If Annan's mission fails to produce an Iraqi compliance with weapons inspections, administration officials said Tuesday an extended air bombardment campaign will become a virtual certainty. Whereas the administration's old line was that military force could come, "within weeks not months," by next

week the new slogan will be "days not weeks," officials said. "The United States is supportive of his trip, and we wish him well," said US ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson. "But we reserve the right to disagree if the conclusion of his trip is not consistent with UN resolutions and our own national interest."

President Clinton Tuesday offered his most detailed case so far to explain why curtailing Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs is worth going to war, while the administration blessed an effort by the United Nations secretary general to travel to Baghdad to seek a diplomatic

solution to the crisis.

In an address to military personnel at the Pentagon, Clinton said Iraq's seven-year history of "delay and deception" over weapons inspections since its surrender in the Gulf War has created an impasse in which a US military strike may be "the only answer." Insisting that a diplomatic solution remains "by far our preference," Clinton also laid down what he called inflexible US terms for a negotiated deal to avert military action and allow UN weapons inspections to continue.

"We have no business agreeing to any resolution of this that does not include free,

unfettered access to the remaining sites by people who have integrity and proven competence in the inspection business," Clinton said.

At the Pentagon, Clinton was joined by Vice President Gore, Defense Secretary William S. Cohen, and nearly all the senior members of his national security team except Richardson, who was in New York negotiating over the allied "advice" Annan would take with him to Baghdad. The speech, carried live by television networks, came on the eve of broad effort by the administration to build public support for confronting Iraq.

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SHOWDOWN



Chaos in downtown Amman last Friday after police chased demonstrators into the Grand Mosque. Opposition parties promise to hold another rally in Irbid on Friday

Opposition plans another rally to challenge official ban

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer

ONCE AGAIN emotions are high and relations are tense between the government and opposition parties. This time the quarrel is over public demonstrations in support of Iraq in its current confrontation with the United States.

The opposition says it will go on with its agenda of drumming up public support to condemn US threats against Iraq. Such an agenda includes holding rallies—an action that the government has sworn to ban at any price. And last Friday the government had a chance to make it

point. Police dispersed thousands of demonstrators who congregated in front of Al Hussein Mosque, downtown Amman, in order to organize a rally for the support of Iraq. Taking part in the rally were leaders of political parties, popular organizations and associations who had earlier failed to get a permission from the government to organize the march.

Demonstrators gathered and began their march citing slogans in support of Iraq. Slogans like "We shall sacrifice our souls and spill our blood for the sake of Iraq," in addition to the usual anti-American and anti-Israeli shouts.

Police used batons and dogs to disperse the crowd. There were reports of minor injuries and a number of demonstrators were arrested. They were later released.

The government said it was afraid of infiltrators who belong to a "fifth column" and who might jeopardize the national interest of Jordan. To justify its crude actions last Friday it said some demonstrators were about to throw bombs. None of these allegations were proven.

Now the opposition promise to strike again. Tomorrow, Friday, the opposition alliance that include political parties, professional associations and a number of NGOs, will be holding a public rally in Irbid, right

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Cabinet reshuffle does not mark change in policy

AMMAN (Star)—Prime Minister Dr. Abdel Salam Majali reshuffled his cabinet this week after a period of speculations, but observers do not believe the change will mark a departure from the one-year-old government policy.

His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday swore in six new ministers at a brief ceremony at the Royal Court after issuing a Royal Decree endorsing a limited reshuffle in Dr. Majali's government.

The King also appointed outgoing Minister of Foreign Affairs Fawaz Tarawneh as Chief of the Royal Court, replacing Awn Khasawneh. Dr. Tarawneh has served as ambassador to Washington and chief peace negotiator with Israel.

The reshuffle included the ministries of information; foreign affairs; education and higher education; labor; transportation; post and communications; culture and youth, state for parliamentary and legal affairs; and social development.

The latter portfolio was given to moderate Islamist and former IAF member Bassam Umoush. Mr. Umoush was dismissed by an internal Muslim Brotherhood tribunal last



Majali

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INSIDE



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Napoleon**

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Ship shape to attack Iraq?

By Nicholas Goldberg

ABOARD THE CARRIER INDEPENDENCE IN THE GULF—One hundred miles from Iraq, on an enormous structure that is more like a floating Grand Central Station than a traditional ship, Cmdr. Drew Brugal—"Bluto" to his colleagues—is preparing for war. As commander of the Black Knights, a squadron of 10 F-14 fighter jets and 300 men, he's leading reconnaissance flights, practicing bombing runs and teaching his pilots, who usually are stationed in Japan, the terrain of the enemy. Striding through the hangar and the landing deck, where men are pushing trolleys of Phoenix missiles and precision-guided bombs and affixing them to the wings of his planes, Brugal is cajoling, encouraging, exhorting.

"They don't know it yet, but the real thing is totally different," said Brugal, 40, who flew 38 missions in Operation Desert Storm. "You see better; you smell better; you sense things. Everything is peaked."

Even as Brugal checks the reconnaissance pictures he just brought back from a flight over southern Iraq, Tony Freire is about six levels below the landing deck, doing his job. Freire, a petty officer 1st class, is in charge of Main Machinery

Room No. 1, in the bowels of the ship, with its giant boilers and electricity generators, its valves and ducts and endless gauges—"the heartbeat of the ship," he calls it. When planes are catapulted from the landing strip, it is Freire's steam that does the work.

In his job, Freire has gone weeks without seeing the sun or the sky. Freire and Brugal don't know each other, but both, in their way, are vital to the plans being prepared for the upcoming weeks with Iraq, tiny pieces in an enormous puzzle being played out across the world. They are two of approximately 5,000 men aboard the Independence, which in turn is one of two US aircraft carriers—with the George Washington—standing by in the Gulf. Brugal's 10 F-14s, the Grumman-made Tomcats, are among 320 aircraft now stationed in the region. An impressive armada of smaller warships—destroyers, submarines and cruisers—are patrolling as well, and, in all, there are nearly 30,000 troops in place for the strike.

if it comes.

As US officials continued to prepare for what they call "the military option" in the standoff with Iraqi President Saddam

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Jordan flays report on Mish'al affair, Netanyahu calls King

AMMAN (Star)—Jordan condemned conclusions of an official inquiry into the Mossad's botched assassination attempt of Hamas leader Khaled Mish'al for endorsing political killings by the Israeli government.

Several Jordanian officials considered the outcome of the investigation as posing new Israeli threats to strike again at Palestinian activists in Amman. On Wednesday *The Jerusalem Post* reported that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had a telephone conversation with His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday. The newspaper said the call dealt with efforts to "regain diplomatic momentum lost because of the Mish'al Affair."

The paper said Israeli officials were unable to confirm or deny news of the phone call reported by Israel Radio. But the *Post* said Netanyahu's wanted to reassure the King that Israel understands his disappointment at the Committee's failure to criticize the choice of Amman as the venue for the Mossad's abortive bid to assassinate Mish'al last September.

The paper said Israel's foreign ministry had dispatched a copy of the report to the embassy in Amman for immediate relay to the Royal Palace. Jordanian officials criticized the report's findings and Netanyahu's statement that anti-terror operations will continue "wherever necessary." Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid was quoted as saying that "we will not allow such acts to take place on our territory."

The *Post* said routine con-

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THE STAR ONLINE

<http://star.arabia.com>

To read or not read!

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divided into five categories. The first are the guest members, whose ages range from 7 to 12 years, in which members pass a classification test. They can automatically become members if they are among the first five diligent students in their class, Mr. Al Sakka explained.

He added that the second category includes advanced members between the ages of 12 and 16.

Member in the second category must also meet the conditions for the first category. However, guest members can recommend new applicants for advanced membership, Mr. Al Sakka added.

The third category includes members who are 16 years old or more. The fourth category is limited to active members where each member must donate a book stated in a list decided by the league.

The "private membership" is the last category in the league. It includes individual members and those who belong to institutions such as "professors from Jordanian universities, intellectuals and those who work in the media," Mr. Al Sakka continued.

Academic societies which have interests in culture, art, printing and publishing are encouraged to join.

"The league is facing financial problems since most of the funds are provided by members of the executive bureau, because membership are insignificant," Mr. Al Sakka concluded.

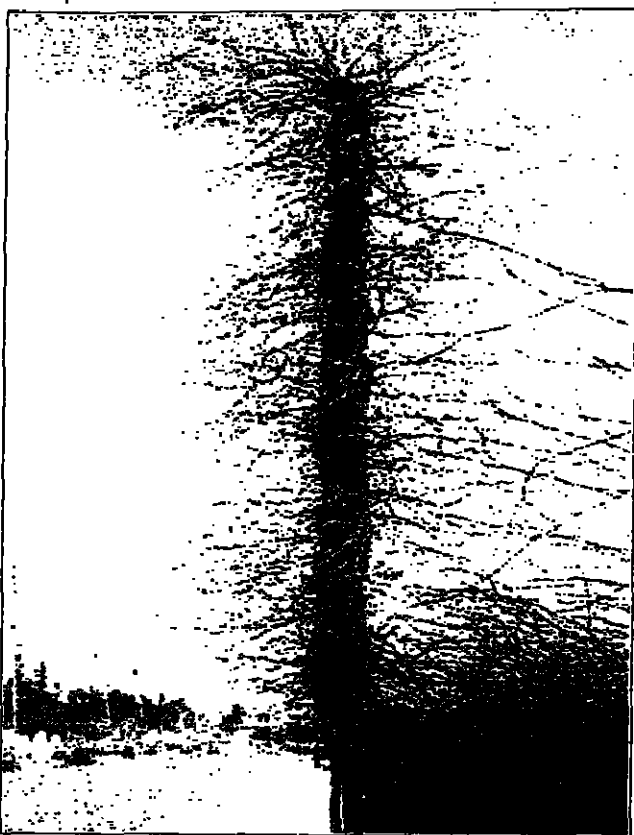
But what are the topics that are of interest to the Jordanian reading public?

First, Jordanians are fond of history books such as autobiographies. They are also interested in political books especially those relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict and wars. "Currently, Jordanians are following with interest the revelations of the Muslim philosopher Roger Garaudy and the Zionist campaign against him," said Mr. Amer Abu Ali, owner of the famous bookstore in downtown Amman.

"Our sales have decreased over the past seven or eight years because of the high cost of books," added Mr. Abu Ali, who has been selling books for over 30 years.

Mr. Abu Ali called on the government to play an effective role in supporting the book trade business. He said in Iraq and Syria the ministries of culture take up the responsibility of book fairs and subsidizing the printing of affordable books.

"It's not only books, people are getting frustrated with politics, so they don't buy newspapers and magazines like they used to," Abu Ali added.



STRANGE ATTACHMENT—A jasmine tree found an unlikely partner in a telephone pole in a Jabal Amman neighborhood. (Photo by Mahmoud Shawkat)

Opposition plans another rally to challenge official ban

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after the Friday prayer.

"The government has its own agenda which is to ban rallies, but we also have our agenda, which is to hold rallies. We will not freeze our plans," former Lower House deputy Hamzeh Mansour told *The Star*. Mansour, who is a leading member of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), was one of a number of Jordanian personalities who were beaten by police inside Al Hussein Mosque. "The police entered the mosque and beat us. It was an unprecedented incident. We were planning a rally in support of Iraq and not against the government."

But now, "the government has put itself against the will of the people, but it will not scare us, we will go on," Mansour said.

The National Committee to Defend Iraq has strongly criticized the government's violent response. It issued a statement

denouncing such actions and describing them as "arbitrary and suppressive" and calling for a fair investigation and for the resignation of the government.

In a statement released early this week, the Jordanian opposition parties described the violent means applied by the government as an aggression against the rights of every Jordanian citizen.

"It is the task of the security men to protect people against any harm and not to beat them. I speak here as a former security officer," Mr. Suleiman Arar, a former minister of interior, and head of Al Mustaqbal party, a pan-Arabist opposition, said. Arar was slightly injured in the clashes.

Arar, who was also speaker of the Lower House, added that "the government is responsible for permitting such practices by the police, which is an unprecedented measure to chase people using dogs and arms inside the mosque."

Leith Shbeilat, president of the Engineers Association, expressed fears over what is happening in such critical times. Members in the committee pointed out that they are considering the possibility of suing the government together with other officials who are responsible for Friday events.

In Irbid the security forces have held siege to the building of the professional Unions Association complex, which is supposed to host a festival for the support of Iraq on Thursday. The committee is determined to hold the rally in spite of failing to get official permission to do so.

Referring to such bans, Abdul Rahim Al Okour, deputy to the overseer of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan, said that it was the national institutions and people who have called for the holding of the event in order to express their support for Iraq.

Al Okour stressed that such practices create an atmosphere of mistrust between the executive authority and the nation's representatives.

Lawyer Hikmat Rawashdeh, who participated in last Friday's rally, was beaten and had to be taken to hospital. He confirmed that his injury won't prevent him from taking part in another rally organized by national activists.

Rawashdeh is determined to sue those who beat him or gave orders for the police to do so.

On his part Emad Abu Diyab, member of the executive bureau of Muslim Brotherhood, described Friday's events as "inhuman and ugly." He said that "it was unbearable to see police chasing and beating people inside the mosque."

"It would have been better for the government to leave people to express their feelings and opinion in a civilized manner," Abu Diyab said.

Baghdad: US claims ring hollow

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do very little with his old, battered Kalashnikov in the face of the missiles and air strikes the US has threatened to inflict on Iraq unless Saddam allows free access to UN inspectors charged with dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. But Ali says training for war is a spiritual exercise.

At Baghdad university, during the lunch break, crowds of students and professors line up mechanically to receive military instructions. The training, says a professor, a strong supporter of Saddam, is in preparation for the prospect of a break-up of the country. Many Iraqis fear that Kurdish groups in the north and Shia dissidents in the south might take advantage of the war, with US blessing, try to unsettle the regime.

To ordinary Iraqis, however, they might feel about their government, another US-led military campaign, can only amplify the deep-seated suspicion that the US has grand designs to take over their country. The US claim that it has no quarrel with the Iraqi people—only with Saddam's regime—rings hollow in Baghdad.

For what Iraqis have seen in the past seven years is a regime that stands firm and gains in strength while the cruelty of sanctions falls squarely on them. "Those they are killing through starvation are our families, our children," says Ahmad, who is studying Islam. "They said the same things during the Gulf war, but they killed civilians and destroyed our infrastructure."

Although there seems to be much confusion in Baghdad about what the UN inspectors are there to do, many say Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction and if it did, then it would only use them as a deterrent. "What have the inspectors been doing for seven years?" says Mohammed Amin, a lawyer.

"And why do they always pick on us? Why aren't we allowed to have chemical and biological weapons when Israel has nuclear weapons, when it lives among Arab states, and no one makes an issue of it."

Back in Shorjah, Haidar, a shy, soft-spoken 15-year-old spoils a foreign reporter and approaches to whisper in her ear that perhaps Kofi Annan will save him and his country from US attacks.

While for young Haidar, Annan will not only avert a war but also lift the heavy burden of sanctions, some Iraqis are more cynical, believing he will be the last act in a show put up by the US to pretend it wants a diplomatic solution. "Kofi Annan will just come here to show that diplomatic efforts have been exhausted," says Daoud, a trader, "and then they will strike."

Financial Times Syndication

Jordan flays Israeli report on Mish'al affair, Netanyahu calls King

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tacts between the two countries will continue with Water Minister Munzir Haddadin expected visit to Israel on Wednesday to meet with National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon and a planned visit to Amman by Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky on Monday.

Lower House Speaker, Sa'd Hayel Al Sroor described the report as attempts for further violations on Jordanian territories.

"Jordan is able to defend itself, its citizens and all those residing on its land, with all its power," he said.

In London, Amnesty International released a statement criticizing outcome of the Israeli official inquiry.

"As we predicted, the committee of inquiry has concentrated on the reasons why the attempted assassination failed than the illegality of the botched killing. Now it has given the green light to state-sanctioned murder," Amnesty International said.

Amnesty demanded the Israeli government to abide by its commitments under international law to respect the right to life and immediately cease the use of extrajudicial executions, whoever may be the target.

According to the report, Netanyahu bears no personal responsibility for the failure of Israeli undercover agents to assassinate Mish'al. But the commission concluded that the head of Mossad, Israel's intelligence service, and other senior undercover operatives badly bungled the affair, which pro-



Mish'al

voked a furor in the region and badly embarrassed Netanyahu's government.

The report, a portion of which was made public, sparked immediate criticism for failing to recommend the dismissal of anyone involved in the botched attempt to murder Khaled Meshal, a senior political official in the Islamic organization Hamas. Nor did it call into question Netanyahu's prior approval of the plan to carry out such an operation on the streets of Amman.

Jordan, which signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, is one of the few Arab countries that has good relations with the Jewish state and has cooperated with it on security and intelligence matters. However, the report's conclusions stained the reputation of Mossad by confirming that the spy service's execution of the operation was marked by poor planning and without the benefit of basic intelligence information.

The assassination attempt, in which Israeli agents tried to kill Mish'al by injecting poison into his ear, went badly wrong when two Mossad agents were arrested after a scuffle with Mish'al's bodyguard. Mish'al was rushed to the hospital with breathing problems but survived after Israel provided the antidote, following Jordan's threat to retaliate against the Mossad agents. Mossad was not aware that Mish'al would be accompanied by a bodyguard, the report said. Nor did it prepare for possible problems in the operation. Furthermore, planners did not prepare adequate escape routes, and the operation's field commander was positioned in such a way that he could not maintain eye contact with his agents, the report noted.

In order to secure the release of the two Israeli agents, Netanyahu also was forced to free Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and as many as 70 other prisoners. The thrust of the three-man government commission's criticism fell on Mossad chief Danny Yatom. One panel member, former national police chief Rafi Peled, said Yatom should be dismissed, but the full commission made no such recommendation. Netanyahu, who met with Yatom Monday, said he would consider the matter after reading the entire report.

Netanyahu has come under withering criticism for his role in the affair, but the commission concluded he exercised reasonable judgment in approving the assassination attempt. The prime minister said Monday that Israel reserves the right to target people it considers terrorists wherever they are operating. "Our policy is that we will strike at terrorism wherever necessary," he told reporters. A major Israeli newspaper, *Yediot Aharonot*, reported that Jordan wanted a public pledge from Israel as part of the inquiry report that its agents would not operate in Jordan.

Some opposition politicians said it was no surprise Netanyahu was spared personal criticism by the commission since two of its members were civil servants who depended directly on him for their jobs.

Clinton spells out case for bombing Iraq

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Clinton portrayed the crisis in a broad historical context, drawing an implicit parallel between the challenge facing the United States and its allies today and the crisis that resulted in the appeasement of Nazi Germany that was later blamed for onset of World War II. "In this century we learned through harsh experience that the only answer to aggression and illegal behavior is firmness, determination, and, when necessary, action," Clinton said. "In the next century, the community of nations may see more and more the very kind of threat Iraq poses now: a rogue state with weapons of mass destruction, ready to use them or provide them to terrorists, drug traffickers, or organized criminals, who travel the world among us unnoticed."

"If we fail to respond today, Saddam and all those who would follow in his footsteps will be emboldened tomorrow by the knowledge that they can act with impunity," he said. But Clinton's speech was notable also for what it did not contain. He did not set any precise deadline about when Baghdad must back down or face an air bombardment campaign, saying only that a resolution must come "soon." Moreover, his remarks seemed purposely subdued.

While Clinton had just received a briefing from his senior military commanders and a potent air and naval arsenal is stationed off Iraq, he did not dwell at any length on what this force is prepared to do. The president made only passing reference to the

30,000 US troops poised off Iraq with an armada of planes and ships. A senior administration official said it was important for Clinton not to appear to be "bloodthirsty" for war at a time when diplomacy still holds at least some promise—especially because France, Russia, and other US partners on the Security Council have expressed varying degrees of opposition to military action.

As President Bush did in that earlier conflict, Clinton personalized the conflict—making plain that US grievances are aimed directly at Saddam. Under the surrender, Clinton said, Saddam agreed to "make a total declaration" of his biological, chemical and nuclear weapons programs, as well as the missiles that would carry these weapons. "Now, instead of playing by the very rules he agreed to at the end of the Gulf War, Saddam has spent the better part of the past decade trying to cheat on this solemn commitment," Clinton said. He noted that Iraq has filed false reports about what programs it has, and that UNSCOM learned the truth about extensive biological weapons programs only after Saddam's son-in-law, Hussein Kamel, defected to Jordan in 1995. Kamel later returned to Iraq and was executed.

And Clinton ridiculed Saddam's claims that he is merely asserting legitimate national pride and sovereignty by restricting access to personal residences. While the White House complex is 18 acres, Clinton said, one site Saddam is claiming off-limits is 40,000 acres—roughly the size of Washing-



Annan

ton, D.C. If Saddam refused to back down and let inspectors go where they want, Clinton said, "he, and he alone, will be to blame for the consequences." Clinton stood by the more limited mission he has outlined lately if a military strike comes. While in the past he has said it is the US goal to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, Clinton last week acknowledged, and repeated Tuesday, that the most that is possible is to "seriously diminish the threat posed" by such weapons. "Let me be clear: A military operation cannot destroy all the weapons of mass destruction capacity," Clinton said. "But it can, and will, leave him significantly worse off than he is now in terms of the ability to threaten the world with these weapons. ... And he will know that the international community continues to have the will to act if and when he threatens again."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

RMC begins local FM transmission Saturday

AMMAN (Star)—The Arabic-language French-owned Radio Monte Carlo (RMC) will start broadcasting on the local FM frequency on Saturday, Christian Charpy, RMC's director general, announced on Wednesday. The popular radio station, which can also be heard on the AM frequency, will officially begin transmission on FM 97.4 under a three-year joint Jordanian-French cultural agreement signed last year. RMC is a public radio station which has been acquired by Radio France International in 1996.

Mr. Charpy said RMC, which was first established in 1972, is working hard to serve millions of Arab listeners in the Arab world today by providing them with credible information that includes political news, culture, business and entertainment.

He added that by joining Radio France International network, RMC can rely on the news gathering services of over 300 qualified journalists all over the world.

RMC joins Middle East Broadcasting Radio-London (MBC) which began its FM transmission last October. BBC Arabic Service is also expected to launch its FM service in Jordan this month.

Ship shape to attack Iraq?

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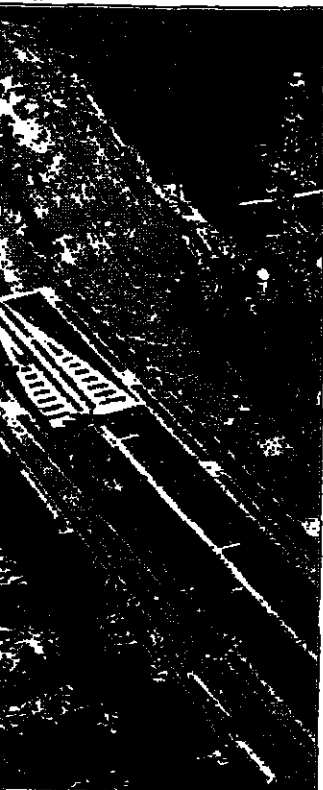
Hussein, Defense Secretary William Cohen dispatched 40 more planes to the region, including six more F-117 Stealth fighters to Kuwait and six more B-52s to the Indian Ocean. But what it takes to maintain that level of preparedness—to maintain just one aircraft carrier—is awesome. The Independence provides 15,000 meals a day and does 100 tons of laundry per month. It includes a full operating room staffed with surgeons, a TV station and thousands of computers. There are 2,300 phones, e-mail services for the crew, automated cash machines in the hallways. The chaplain has enough response to offer religious services for Buddhists and

Muslims several times a week.

The Independence is the oldest active carrier in the US Navy; since it was commissioned in 1959, it has seen service in the Cuban missile crisis, in the Vietnam War, in crises in Libya and Lebanon, and in the Gulf War—and it is scheduled to be taken out of service permanently later this year. It carries more than 50 planes, or "birds" as they're known here, and an array of conventional, non-nuclear weapons, including Phoenix, Sparrow and Sidewinder missiles, old-fashioned gravity bombs and laser-guided weapons that can hit targets 40 miles away.

It has advanced radar warning jets as well as others that neutralize enemy air defense. Signs on the doors of various restricted rooms refer to "anti-submarine warfare," "electronic warfare" and "intelligence." "We have every conceivable weapon that can be loaded on F-14s and F-15s," said Rear Adm. Charles Moore, who commands the Independence Battle Group. "We'll be pre-eminent in any air campaign against Iraq."

Some crewmen acknowledged they were anxious, or excited; most said, however, they were just planning to follow orders. The usual military euphemisms—"collateral dam-



age" for civilian deaths, for instance—dulled most conversations. On one subject, most people agreed: It is time for the situation in Iraq to be resolved once and for all, and there is little point in conducting symbolic air strikes. "This has been dragging out since 1987," said Freire, who has steamed out to the Gulf four times since the late 1980s. "Whether it's diplomatic or military, I think it's time for some closure."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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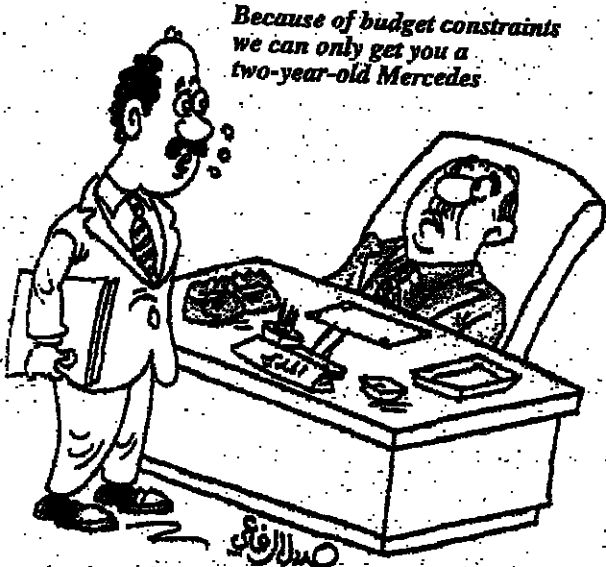
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An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views



No Israeli fighters will cross Jordan

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan confirmed that Jordan will not allow Israeli fighters to cross its air-space to strike Iraq.

Prince Hassan was answering a question about the possibility of taking such action if Israel launches strikes to combat any possible attack by Iraqi forces.

In his meeting with a mission comprising Israeli businessmen and international bankers, Prince Hassan said that, so far, the possibility of an American strike against Iraq has not yet been discussed in terms of its consequences.

But if such a confrontation happens between the US and Iraq, the Regent pointed out that this will lead to blocking Jordanian-Iraqi borders, which means depriving Jordan for 90 per cent of its needs of oil supplies.

Referring to the would-be effects of such a strike, Prince Hassan stated that "we import our oil from Iraq, and we don't have a real alternative, if we buy and transport oil for the market place, then the costs will be more than doubled, if compared with the current cost."

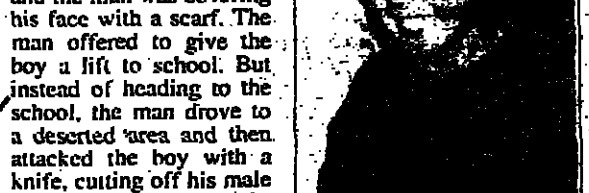
Jordanian officials are still in favor of a diplomatic and peaceful solution for the Iraqi crisis. Jordanians, today, believe strongly that the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein might lose the battle, yet he will certainly win over public opinion if exposed to a US military strike.

A heinous crime

A seven-year-old child was kidnapped and mutilated by an unidentified man last Saturday. Mu'tassim Al Abbadi, was heading to his school at Bayader Wadi Seer, when a man in a yellow car called him by his name, according to the boy's uncle Nassir Al Abbadi. The boy recalled that the weather was cold and the man was covering his face with a scarf. The man offered to give the boy a lift to school. But, instead of heading to the school, the man drove to a deserted area and then attacked the boy with a knife, cutting off his male organs and slashing his neck. He applied a disinfectant on the boy's wounds and then drove him to school, but not before trying to burn the child.

The school principal took the bleeding child to his father who rushed him to the King Hussein Medical Center, where he underwent a three-hour surgery.

Al Bayader police is investigating the incident.



Mu'tassim

Jordanians celebrate Valentine's Day too

Jordanian women received more than 40,000 red roses on Valentine's Day. Jordanian men paid about JD 750,000 in a bid to express their warm feelings for their beloveds and close friends.

However, a dealer at the Flowers Bourse, Mazen Ghalyani, said that the 40,000 roses is not the final figure since others expressed their love with other kinds of flowers such as carnations.

He estimated that at least 70,000 flowers were sold, more than double their normal prices. Red roses were being sold at JD7 each, while the wholesale price is JD1. On normal days the wholesale price is 250 fils.

Detainees relatives stage a sit-in

Relatives and family members of 35 Jordanian and Palestinian political detainees in Kuwait Monday staged a brief sit-in at the Amman office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and submitted a petition to the ICRC representative asking him to intervene and secure their release.

The jailed Jordanians and Palestinians are serving prison sentences ranging from 20 years to life after being found guilty by Kuwaiti courts for "collaborating" with Iraq during its occupation of the emirate.

The families of the prisoners submitted a written petition to the ICRC head of mission requesting his offices to secure their release on humanitarian grounds, since those in jail have left behind families without means of income.

The Kuwaitis were reported to have imprisoned more than 60 Jordanians, accusing them of collaborating with Iraq. Kuwait released 25 of these prisoners in March 1997 under an amnesty announced by the Kuwaiti government in February 1997.

Double crime suspect arrested

After two weeks the security forces managed to arrest a suspect who is believed to be behind recent attacks on two pharmacists. One pharmacist was killed and another was injured in two separate incidents in Amman. The suspect was arrested while he was selling stolen items in Aqaba. Security sources said that they were able to draw a sketch of the suspect through descriptions given by witnesses. Investigators revealed that finger prints lifted from the crime scene also matched those of the suspect. Police are interrogating the suspect on suspicion that he may have also killed a 50-year-old Sri Lankan maid. The woman was shot dead in the head in Jabal Al Weibdeh few months ago.



His Majesty King Hussein held a meeting on Sunday with President of the Palestinian National Authority Yasser Arafat in the presence of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. The two leaders discussed during the meeting bilateral ties, issues of common interest as well as developments relating to the peace process. President Arafat briefed the King on the latest peace negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel including proposals for the resumption of talks.

Medical donors and transplants,

Another precious way of extending life

By Ghassan Joha
Special to The Star

FAR FROM man-made rules and ideological differences, and in spite of the sorrow that we may all face, the act of organ donation must be the highest expression of human relations. Today, organ donation and transplants are routine procedures practiced all over the world regardless of race, sex or faith.

The first successful transplant surgery took place in 1890 which greatly influenced other attempts that failed. The main cause for their failure was the negligence of the histocompatibility. Mohammed Nassar, from the nursing faculty in the University of Jordan, told a symposium, last December in the Specialty Hospital.

Histocompatibility is a term synonymous with compatibility or incompatibility of transplanted tissues. By the middle of this century, transplants began to be possible proportionally with the advanced medicine.

The most serious problem presently facing transplants is the deficiency of donors who are affected by prevalent social customs. Mr Nassar adds. Although Jordan has achieved major strides in organ transplants, the idea itself is hardly getting through to the public.

Prince Firas Bin Ra'd, His Majesty King Hussein's Health Advisor, told the symposium that many want to donate organs of their deceased relatives but cannot because of the lack of a qualified medical staff and the need for a mechanism to organize and distribute organ donations. The Prince also said that organ transplants saves human lives and minimizes medical treatment cost, which is about JD 6.5 million, to cover the dialysis treatment for some of the Kingdom's 700 kidney patients.

The kidney transplant rate abroad is about 95 percent, while in Jordan it's 10 percent only. Director of the Specialty Hospital Khalid Muhaiwas says. He attributes the low rate to the lack of awareness and negative promotion. Dr Muhaiwas notes that the cost of treating one kidney patient by dialysis is around JD 11,000 per year. "However, the success rate of kidney transplant in Jordan is 95 percent," he states.

The most common transplant operations under taken in the country in the past 25 years related to crimes, kidneys and hearts. However, there is still a long way to go in terms of changing attitudes. For this purpose, the Jordan Society for Organ Donation, whose president is HRH Princess Rania Al Abdallah, was founded in 1996.

Besides persuading people to support each other, the Society wants to provide a media campaign showing the advantages and importance of organ donation in Jordan. Medically, uprooting an organ and replanting it in another human body can be made under three conditions.

"First, when the mind is clinically dead and the heart is still beating, many organs can still be removed, these include the eyes, heart, kidneys, liver and others," Dr Muhaiwas says. "Otherwise, only corneas can be taken when the corpse is pronounced totally dead. While kidneys, lungs, spinal cord and liver are only countable among living transplants."

But there is also another dimension to all this. Both religion and law approved organ donation within certain conditions. A temporary law forbidding the re-

forms, mutilates or harms the body was enacted in 1980. The law stipulates also that the approval of the donor must be given before surgery takes place; also there must not be any profit made out of donations.

From a religious point of view, both Muslims and Christians surprisingly praise the idea. "Christianity doesn't oppose medical donation in under any circumstances," Rev. Hanna Kildani told The Star.

Morally, donation is acceptable as long as there is no deformity or harm, he adds. "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another as I love you" (John 13:34) from the Bible. "The guardians also can give their approval contentedly after consultation," Rev. Kildani adds.

Islam as well permits donation. "The only benefit that both donor and recipient receive is a physical one and no more," mufti of Amman Sheikh Saeed Hijawi, recently remarked. He explains that no diminution must harm the dignity of the donor or the health of the recipient.

The Holy Quran urged followers to do their best in front of God and his Messenger, by moval of organs if it saying "Anyone who spares life acts

as if he has granted life to all mankind." (The Table VI:5:32).

One of the main objectives of the JSOD is to present those who gone through the noble practice. Best to remember the late 17-year-old William Akroush, who by his death last November, saved five individuals by having seven of his organs donated: the heart, corneas, lungs and the kidneys, were safely transplanted at once.

"By replanting his organs in other people, I'll always see his traces, acting, beating and moving everywhere," William's father, Adeb Akroush, says. He hopes the recipients will somehow fill William's shoes by helping those in need. Dr Bassam Al Akshesh, a surgeon, says that in 1996, 65 people died—mostly heart patients—because of lack of donors. "Donation is a national duty approved by the Heavenly laws," he stresses.

Haifa Hattar-Makhamra is another living symbol on nationalism. Not only does she have a happy marriage but Mrs Makhamra was given a new lease of life by obtaining a kidney from her elder sister. "After weeks of suffering, I went through with the transplant last April after my sister agreed to

be a donor," she tells The Star.

Mrs Makhamra, 35, decided to have the surgery as soon as possible rather than wait. "The histocompatibility test showed that the concurrence between my sister's tissues and mine was rather low. However, the surgeon agreed on the transplant since it is within the same family."

All transplant recipients require an immunosuppressive therapy, which is directed primarily at blocking the induction or expression of cell-mediated immunity. Only identical twins are exempted from the therapy. Even though she had a 95 percent success rate, Mrs Makhamra is still recovering from the surgery.

"I urge everyone to accept the idea of serving as donors with deep satisfaction and understanding. It creates mutual interest between people. Although there was post-operative side-effects, my body is completely cured, likewise my sister is now enjoying life as ever as before. God granted us happiness, so let's be grateful to those who are suffering."

Mrs Wallen meets King and senior officials

Swedish FM reaffirms support for diplomatic solution on UN-Iraq crisis

AMMAN(Star)—His Majesty King Hussein reaffirmed that full compliance with the UN resolutions is one of the means to defuse the current crisis between Iraq and the UN over arms inspection. "I believe that full compliance with UN resolutions is a way of defusing it at the same time there way by which the crisis can be resolved without the inevitable disaster that seems to be looming ahead in terms of some formula that could work. I really don't know," the King told reporters following a meeting with Swedish Foreign Minister Lina Wallen.

Talks during the meeting focused on bilateral relations, Middle East peace developments, and the ongoing efforts to defuse the crisis and solve it through diplomatic means.

Mrs Wallen paid tribute to efforts being made by the King to avoid a military solution to the crisis in Iraq. She also commended the King's wise policy and determination to promote security and stability in the region.

The Swedish Foreign Minister held talks with Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali.

In joint press conference at Amman airport with Foreign Minister Dr Fayez Tarawneh prior to her departure concluding a three-day visit to Jordan, Mrs Wallen said that "Sweden is a peace-loving country we do not believe in solving conflicts by the use of force."

The crisis between Iraq and the United Nations topped the agenda of Mrs Wallen's talks. The two sides share the same stand to avoid further military escalation, Tarawneh said.

In the wake of the current situation "we can not rule out a military action but we will do everything possible to avoid the

ghost of war," the Swedish Minister said.

Mrs Wallen urged the Iraqi government to think deeply and understand the gravity of the situation and cooperate with the United Nations to avoid the occurrence of a tragedy in Iraq in case diplomatic efforts deemed failure.

If a peaceful solution can not be found, "military force can be used in such a situation," she said.

She said she came to the region to explore means to

revive the peace process. "We have to do a lot to bring the peace process back on track," she said. Her visit to Jordan means nice memories but at the same time she feels the danger in the region and fears from serious consequences. Mrs Wallen added.

She pointed out that she met Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad said al Sabah and tried "to convince him that the situation is very serious."

She voiced hope that the crisis could be solved by the UN.

Press Council

Human rights activists

Human rights activists

The Jordanian Human Rights Society (JHRS) released a statement on the latest government measures taken to foil a peaceful rally in Al Hussein Mosque in Amman, Friday organized in support of Iraq.

The statement criticizes the way the government has handled the issue and for using force to disperse the rally. While the government says its actions were driven by security issues, the Society describes these measures to be an excessive precaution that is mainly targeted at imposing restrictions on people's freedom of expression.

The statement continues to say that there is a trend inside the government that is hostile to democracy and human rights. This trend rejects peaceful protests related to social, political, economic demands or other general issues.

Giving evidence of violence exercised by the government the statement drives the following cases:

In May last year, the police used force to disperse about seventy journalists who gathered in front of the Prime Ministry to protest the temporary Press and Publication Law—which was canceled by the High Court of Justice, last month.

Also few months ago, force was used against a gathering of university students asking for their right to form a students' union.

Even when pharmacists arranged for a sit-in to show support for one colleague, who was murdered early this month, again they were not given a permission to protest.

The government's ambiguous stance towards the verdict of the High Court of Justice, which ruled in favor of a dozen weekly newspapers, is another example of the suppressive trend of such government.

On its side the Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) also voiced criticism to the government's stances in handling issues related to people's rights to express their opinions freely and without restrictions.

The organization expressed concern about the acts of violence used by police against demonstrators who assembled after last Friday prayer in support of Iraq. The Organization reported that some of those demonstrators were beaten inside the mosque and chased by the police. Such an action is described by the statement as an obvious violation of freedom of expression and human rights. It added that such acts contradict the democratic process. The AOHR called for an investigation to punish those who ordered the violence against the demonstrators.

Cabinet reshuffle does not mark change in policy

Continued from page 1

December for violating a decision to boycott the parliamentary elections.

Dr Abdallah Ensour was appointed deputy prime minister for services affairs, minister of information. He replaced Dr Samir Mutaweh at the information ministry. Dr Jawad Anani was appointed deputy prime minister for development affairs, minister of foreign affairs.

Dr Mohammed Hamdan took the education and higher education portfolio. Dr Mohammed Mahdi Al Farhan was appointed minister of labor while Sami Qamou was given the ministry of transportation, post and telecommunications. Tala Sata'n Al Hasani became minister of culture and youth. Dr Khalid Al Zou'bi was appointed minister of state for parliamentary and legal affairs.

The reshuffle ended speculations over the continuation of the government in the light of a series of internal and external developments. Analysts expected a cabinet reshuffle to take place after the termination of the Lower House's ordinary session, whether in the form of a reshuffle or a formation of a new government.

A number of political observers believe Dr Al Majali, by making such reshuffle, has succeeded in extending the term of his government, which was supposed to be changed, as they suggest, after the termination of the current parliamentary session.

Others say the prime minister carried out the reshuffle at this time to appease public sentiments since the Jordanian public have got used to frequent reshuffles.

The government succeeded to get the Lower House's vote of confidence few weeks ago and the general budget was also ratified.

Some hinted that there is a correlation between the reshuffle and the government's defeat in the battle to pass a temporary press and publication law. But there are no indications that government's policy will be changed as a result of the reshuffle.

common between us and Jordan including the inter-faith dialogue and we hope we can develop our bilateral relations in all fields," Mrs Wallen said.

Foreign Minister Tarawneh said the visit by the Swedish Minister "reflects the distinguished relations between our two friendly countries." It gave an opportunity to discuss a number of issues including bilateral relations and cooperation with Sweden within the European Union whose relations with us, we consider as strategic.

"We know that Sweden plays an active and effective role in supporting the peace process, which is considered a historical development in the region," the Minister told reporters.

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Business scene

A visiting Italian delegation held talks with Amman Chamber of Industry and Trade to explore means of expanding trade exchange between the two countries and improving investment climate in Jordan. The two sides also focused on ways of carrying out joint touristic ventures in addition to improve infrastructure facilities in the free zones and industrial estates. The trade balance between Jordan and Italy is in favour of the latter. Jordanian exports to Italy in 1996 were nearly \$29.1 million, compared with imports worth \$253.3 million. Till last November, Jordanian exports to Italy stood at \$18.8 million against imports totalling \$217.9 million.

Total investments of the Jordan Islamic Bank so far reached JD 462 million. According to the bank's 1997 budget, shareholders' rights totalled JD 46 million while its assets hit JD 65.1 million in the same year. The bank which was the first local bank to operate in accordance with the Islamic Sharia rules, was also among leading Jordanian banks to offer Auto Teller (AT) service for its clients. During 1997, it recorded a remarkable progress in expanding the network of AT service, in addition to master card for credits and investment portfolios.

The Secretary General of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Ahmad Al-Bashir, stressed that the Kingdom's reserve of various crude oil by products, is supposed to meet the country's needs for about two or three months, most of which is petrol. The Kingdom's daily consumption of the crude oil processed products is about 14,000 tons per day, which is also the volume of Iraqi oil exports to the Kingdom. This is if the oil supplies from Iraq maintain their present size. But if Iraqi oil exports cease, then Jordan is prepared to import petroleum by products from another sources, most probably Saudi Arabia.

Economic experts fear consequences of military strike on Iraq

By Ilham Sadiq
Star Staff Writer

AS TENSION between Iraq and the United States heightens, Jordanians are voicing their fears that their country stands to suffer if an American military strike against Iraq takes place.

On the official and popular levels, Jordanian-Iraqi ties have faltered after the execution of Jordanian nationals in Iraq and in the aftermath the heinous crime that took the lives of five Iraqis in Amman last month. Despite this, economic relations were not affected and in light of the current confrontation with the US, Jordanian sentiments were once again in full gear behind the Iraqi cause.

Officially, Jordan is supporting efforts to avert a military attack on Iraq. It has warned that such an attack could threaten the whole region and naturally Jordan will be the most to be affected.

Economic observers have warned against the consequences of a military strike on Jordan's economy.

Jordan's dependency on the Iraqi market did not change after the Gulf War of 1991. Jordan depends to a large extent on the Iraqi market to sell local products, while the country's entire oil supplies are imported from Iraq at discounted prices.

After the approval of the oil-for-food deal in December 1996, Jordan was given priority in getting export contracts to Iraq. The bulk of these contracts was added to the bilateral trade protocol which is renewed annually.

During their meeting with Iraqi Minister of Trade Mohammed Mahdi Saleh in Amman this week, Jordanian exporters



and manufacturers reiterated their full support for Iraq as it struggles to lift UN sanctions.

For Jordan, the lifting of the sanctions promises a booming of trade relations with Baghdad. On the other hand, a military strike will cripple trading relations and may lead to a set-back to the Jordanian economy which is about to conclude a tough readjustment plan administered by the IMF.

Jordanian economist Ahmad Al-Nammari said Jordan will suffer if a military strike takes place. "Iraq is a strategic trade partner and backing it is a must in order to protect our own interests," he said.

Before the Gulf crisis trade exchange between the two countries reached more than \$1 billion annually. But after the Gulf War and because of UN sanctions, the volume of trade exchange dropped considerably. Annual trade protocol was decreased in 1996 from \$400 million to \$200 million but it

was increased later in 1997 to \$255 million. For this year, it also maintained its former level.

However, Al-Nammari, who is also the general director of Jordan Woolen Industries Co., said that "even at \$255 million, our exports to Iraq will grind to a halt if the strike takes place."

If borders are closed, to avert a flood of refugees, then factories will be stuck with unsold goods and some of them may be forced to shut down, he added.

"This also means factories will dismiss workers adding to the unemployment problem which in turn is associated with numerous economic and social problems," Al-Nammari said.

Ali Al-Danaj, member of the Amman Chamber of Industry, also warned against the negative effects of a military escalation. "If Iraq is attacked many refugees are expected to flock to Jordan as was the case in 1991," he said.

A humanitarian crisis will severely burden Jordan's infra-

structure and at any rate, officials say Jordan is not in a position to handle a refugee problem.

On their part, pharmaceutical producers are concerned with losses resulting from a military showdown.

According to the oil-for-food program, Jordanian pharmaceutical exports to Iraq last year reached \$85 million. This year, producers expect Iraq to import \$80 million worth of Jordanian drugs.

Observers say the effect of the crisis reaches beyond trade exchanges with Iraq. Rather, the impact could extend to involve other vital sectors such as tourism, shipping, transport, clearance and in particular stock dealings at the Amman Financial Market (AFM).

Owners of tour agencies have complained that they received cancellations of touristic groups arriving to the Kingdom as a result of the tension between the United States and Iraq.

A tourism agent, who asked for anonymity, said the crisis comes at the height of the tourism season and this promises to affect hotel capacity.

Stock dealings also seem to be negatively affected by the general mood in the region. For the first time since last August — when the official index hit more than 170 points — the AFM official index dropped to 164.96 percent over the last two weeks. The prevailing trend in the stock dealings was the

decline and weak movement.

By the middle of the week the index continued falling to close at 164.65 points. The shares' turnover was JD 1.4 million, of which 66 percent of deals were for the Arab Bank share.

What also worsens the movement of stock dealings and AFM is the shortage of enough liquidity and doubts of some foreign investors on the profit they can get if they buy shares in such bad timing. They only prefer to wait and see, and this takes stock dealings at AFM back to a slump.

Some Jordanian businessmen admit that it is their fault to completely be dependent on one market, which is Iraq.

Iraq is a market where about 30% of our exports go, but this doesn't give us an excuse not to look for alternatives. It is as if you put all your eggs in one basket, and such a strategy could lead to endless losses and expose our economy to fluctuations of the market.

The showdown between Iraq and the United States has created a sense of anxiety in Jordan. Many families in Jordan are stocking foodstuff items as a precautionary measure in anticipation of food shortages.

In case of a military confrontation, Jordan has enough oil stocks to last for 40 days, while provisions of foodstuff and medicines are ample and can last for six months. ■

Jordan and Iraq renew trade protocol at \$255, despite calls for increase

Amman (Star) — Jordan and Iraq signed their trade protocol Sunday at \$255 million, maintaining last year's ceiling. This is despite calls by some Jordanian industrialists to increase the value of the agreement.

The protocol allocates \$185 million for Jordanian products while the remaining \$70 million is left for different services.

For the first time a sum of \$7 million (\$5 million for 1998 protocol and \$2 million for 1997) shall be transferred to repay former debts owed by the Iraqi side to Jordanian companies.

This is added to a volume of Jordanian exports to Iraq in the

light of the oil for food formula.

About more than \$90 million worth of Jordanian goods are expected to be exported to Iraq in line with the second phase of the oil for food deal, including detergents, foodstuffs and pharmaceuticals.

The trade protocol was based on the Jordanian needs of Iraqi oil by-products, according to Hani Al-Mulki, minister of Industry and Trade.

Earlier this year, the oil protocol was approved between the two sides upon which Jordan imports 90,000 barrels of oil and by-products from Iraq in the exchange of supplies of foods and pharmaceuticals. ■

Roundtable highlights investment climate in Jordan

Amman (Star) — The session of the joint Jordanian-Dutch roundtable held lately in Amman focused on investment opportunities in Jordan and means of strengthening bilateral ties and boosting trade exchange between the two countries.

The meeting was organized by the Investment Promotion Corp. (IPC) and Global Panel (a universal Dutch company) and was attended by about 15 investment corporations willing to explore investment climate in Jordan.

At the opening session, Dr Jawad Al-Anani, the deputy prime minister for development affairs, explained the current situation in the Kingdom saying that Jordan is facing the challenges of the coming millennium, the most important of which is to make the region more safe and stable.

Dr Anani, who was speaking on behalf of His Royal Highness Prince Hassan, pointed out that the so-called dividends of the peace treaty signed between Jordan and Israel have not yet materialized, or most accurately were below aspirations. The positive impact of the peace treaty on Jordan, especially in the field of investments, were not that much

encouraging.

On his part, Dr Muntaser Al-Ogla, director of the Investment Promotion Corp., spoke about the success of the economic reform program launched in Jordan since 1989, pointing out that it had enabled the Kingdom to reduce its foreign debts, move fast in privatization policy and record a satisfactory growth rate estimated at about 6.6 per cent.

Referring to the signing of qualifying industrial zones agreement with the US, Dr Ogla said that it guarantees free access of Jordanian products manufactured in Al-Hassan Industrial Estate in Irbid to the American markets, free of customs duties.

Dr Ogla also highlighted incentives provided by the new investment law for various sectors covering industry, tourism, hotels, marine transport and agriculture.

He pointed out new laws such as income tax, labor and customs policy will have a positive outcome on the economy.

Total investments last year reached JD 380 million, foreign investments only stood at JD 124 million, representing 34 per cent of the total.

The Dutch ambassador to Jordan, Barnard Tangelder

stressed the need to bolster economic and trade ties between the two countries in light of the EU-Jordanian partnership agreement concluded recently hoping that it will open new horizons for co-operation and joint investments.

Also means of boosting co-operation between the private sectors in Jordan and other countries including the Netherlands were highlighted by the chairman of the Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA), Hamdi Tabba'a, who stressed the importance of implementing the mechanism of joint business councils to organize, for meetings and various economic activities.

Also taking part in the sessions of the roundtable was Dr Nabil Ammari, secretary general of the Ministry of Planning, who briefed the audience on the Jordanian policies that are mainly targeted at achieving more openness on the global markets.

Fields of co-operation between Jordan and the Netherlands focus on manufacturing electric equipment, dairy products, fertilizers and producing Dead Sea products. In addition there is co-operation in joint ventures in the fields of tourism and medium-size projects. ■

Europe 'overestimated' China's market

By James Harding in Shanghai

OVER HALF the European companies with operations in China have overestimated the market's size, taken longer to achieve profitability than forecast and performed worse than expected, according to a new survey of European investment in China.

The study, published by Fiducia, a China-based management consultancy, expects that European businesses will rein in their investment in China over the next two years as they go through a period of consolidation and restructuring, before entering a new phase of investment after 2000.

The conclusions of the survey echo recent statistical evidence that signals a possible fall in foreign investment in China in 1998. They suggest that foreign companies are reassessing the balance of opportunity and cost of starting up operations in China.

Actual foreign direct investment in China rose to \$45.2bn in 1997, up 8.5 per cent compared with 1996 levels. But national contracted foreign direct investment, which represents money pledged but not yet spent in China, fell by 29.3 per cent to \$51.78bn, raising concerns of a decline in FDI this year.

The survey, which is based upon answers from 96 managers of European companies in China, suggests that a number of problems have caused more than half the businesses to fail to reach their performance targets.

According to the report, 54 per cent of the companies have performed worse than planned,

21 per cent are on target and 25 per cent reported that performance had surpassed expectations.

Most of the companies questioned 61 per cent had overestimated the potential of the China market. The majority of European businesses 60 per cent also said that corruption was a constraint on their operations.

Fifty-five per cent had encountered counterfeits of their product, and 71 per cent said that they had found no successful remedy for the counterfeit problem.

Another problem for European companies with manufac-

turing plants in China has proved to be competition from imports, typically through Hong Kong, of identical items made by the parent company. Just over 60 per cent of the surveyed companies said they had encountered problems with such parallel imports.

The report also listed methods of retaining staff as an issue. Many foreign managers have found the high turnover of employees to be a frequent headache.

The most effective means of keeping staff was to offer a loyalty bonus. Other incentives included extra allowances, housing allowances, career

planning and housing loans. A little over 5 per cent of the managers said overseas training was a remedy against high staff turnover.

Of those companies planning to expand their operations in China, more than two-thirds were choosing to invest in a wholly foreign-owned enterprise rather than a joint venture, reinforcing the perception that enthusiasm for Sino-foreign joint ventures has cooled.

* European Investment in China, published by Fiducia. Price \$195. ■

Financial Times Syndication

Business Chronicle

Big projects, white elephants

WHITE ELEPHANT projects are becoming something of a worldwide phenomenon. What is disturbing about them is that these projects are taking their toll in financial waste. Latest international statistics show that up to \$34 billion are wasted on white-elephant projects worldwide. Furthermore in the majority of cases such projects don't see the light of day.

In the Third World alone statistics show that about \$23 billion go to waste. In Lebanon, which is going through a program of mass construction, public financial waste for 1997 was registered at \$425 million. It has been suggested that up to \$16 billion are wasted in Africa over projects which don't see the light of day.

Bad news, you might say, and some would argue that this shows that there is widespread mismanagement in the Third World countries, something that is greatly affecting their development.

This might be partially true, but according to studies, financial waste also takes place in Europe, the United States, Russia, Japan, India, and in our part of the world, the Middle East.

And here the emphasis is on public financial waste carried out by the state. At the heart of the problem is the lack of proper studies, before governments embark on such vast projects. Millions of dollars have gone to waste on projects that include museums, government buildings, conference halls for international meetings and so on. In some cases hospitals and schools are the object of bureaucratic red tape, where money channelled down is lined in the pockets of upstarts and petty officials.

And this happens all over the world. It is said that a good deal of waste happens in Europe. In France for example, there was an attempt to build an international lecture and conference center. However, after a four-year study and at a cost of \$175 million, the project is still ink on paper.

But there are more examples of projects which are undertaken without careful studies, they eventually turn up on the scrap heap looking like eyesores. Also in Lebanon, Sudan, Somalia, Mauritania, and most of the countries in Africa, the situation is the same and hundreds of millions of dollars are wasted.

Furthermore, in these countries there is an inflation in the costs of projects such as the building of roads, government buildings, water works, electricity and sewage. It is sometimes double that of the actual cost, projects take much longer than estimated, and frequently they have to be reworked.

This is attributed to financial and political scandals. This is the case for instance, in housing projects in a number of African countries. A number of projects were being built not up to the proper standards and specifications. This was found out after an earthquake which left thousands of people dead in the housing complexes.

Such disasters also occurred in Egypt, Mauritania, Zambia, Uganda, Cameroon and Zambia. The same case goes for projects in Latin America.

What is more of a worry is the fact that such projects increase public debt in these countries, and that means also an increase in their indebtedness on international markets.

In Russia also the issue of financial waste is rife. Over the last three years resource waste was in the order of \$12 billion while inflation, costs of living and the consequent poverty increased at the same time.

So what are the solutions, one might ask? Well, greater planning and better management might certainly be the case, with greater and more rigorous studies being taken. However, what is at stake here is the issue of finance, there has to be more strict control to make sure that the money spent does not get into the wrong pockets. ■

The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

http://:star.arabia.com

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 18 February

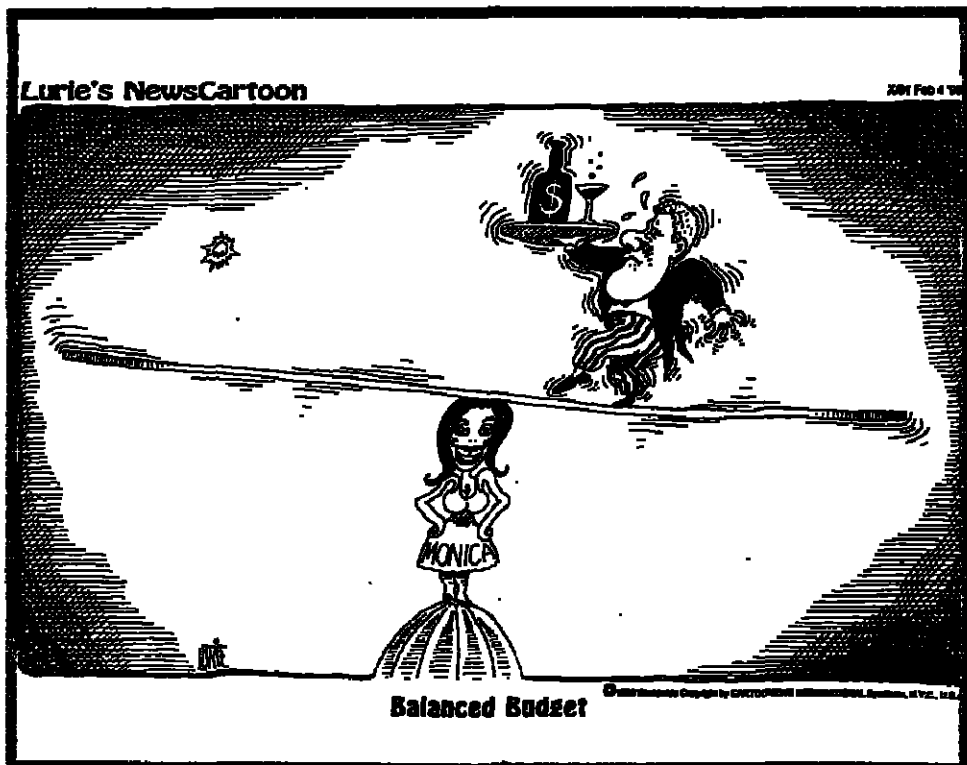
	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SP	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LYT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

MARKET WATCH 7-10 FEBRUARY

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Paper Industry 5.63 Al-Bayr Pharm. 4.48 Ready Cement Company 0.93 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Paper Industry 5.00 National Industry 2.78 Middle East Bank 2.97 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Islamic Bank 5.03 Car Union 5.02 Live Stock & Poultry 4.88 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROCOL 5.88 Jordan Sulfate Chemical 5.17 Moderate Industry 5.17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lorry Owner Union 4.97 National Cable 4.90 Al-Ahliya Trade Center 7.76 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Islamic Bank 5.24 Trade Center 5.00 Paper Industry 4.15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle East Bank 5.13 Jordan Islamic Bank 5.09 Jordan Rock Wool 3.77 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade Center 5.26 Car Union 5.07 Hotel Pricas 3.75
General Price Pointer 167.960	164.790	164.650	165.030
Trade Volume 739042	538867	1384951	1071782
Stock Volume 883511	513567	475382	894894
Highest Traded Stocks			
Arab Bank 336520	East Hotels 283773	Arab Bank 924260	Arab Pharm. 287600

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949



Iraqi opposition is gaining support in US

By John Daniszewski

AMMAN—They've been decimated by Saddam Hussein, forsaken by Western governments, neglected by neighboring Arab countries and sneered at by many in the foreign policy establishment. But everyone's whipping boy—the Iraqi opposition—may be gaining credibility again as more politicians and policy-makers come around to the proposition that sanctions, periodic bombings and hopes in the "silver bullet" option cannot substitute for a long-term plan to replace the Iraqi dictatorship.

The key to removing Saddam Hussein and his threat to develop and use weapons of mass destruction is to reinstate Western support for a democratic transition in Iraq, opposition leaders say. This could involve giving official recognition to a "transitional government," setting up protected bases in northern and southern Iraq and assisting it in acquiring the frozen assets of the Iraqi regime.

During the past few weeks, as President Clinton and his administration worked to establish international support for military strikes against Iraq to force it to allow free access to UN weapons inspections, the opposition has started to win important backers again among congressional Republicans and, they say, on the president's national security staff.

In testimony before Congress, former CIA Director R. James Woolsey endorsed some of the proposals of the opposition, such as recognizing the Iraqi government in exile and providing "vigorous air protection" for government foes in northern and southern Iraq. In London, US and British diplomats held a 90-minute meeting with a range of opposition groups to exchange views on the current crisis. "The only way that the international community can be secure in the

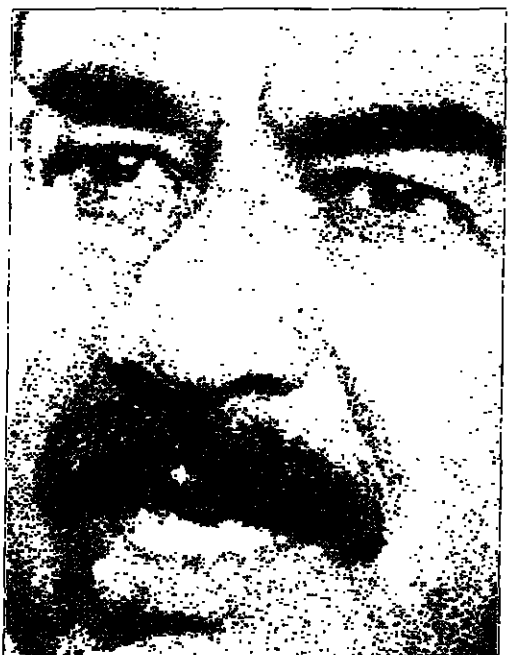
knowledge that Iraq does not possess weapons of mass destruction would be by helping the Iraqi opposition get rid of the regime of Saddam Hussein," said Nabeel Musawi of the Iraqi National Congress.

Abdul-Rahim Mowath, a director of another opposition group, the Iraqi National Accord, said in Jordan that getting rid of the regime might be easier than many in the West assume. Indeed, if Western planes knocked out Saddam Hussein's television transmitters and set up their own to declare that the Iraqi leader has been ousted, he believes that the whole country would rally to a successor government.

The only reason Saddam Hussein has survived thus far is a ruthless security apparatus that imprisons or wipes out opponents—their families and associates included—the moment they fall under a shadow of any suspicion, he contends. Western intentions toward Saddam Hussein, however, are perceived by many in the opposition with bitter cynicism. A widespread opinion among Iraqi exiles is that a country as powerful as the United States could easily have killed or removed the Iraqi leader at any time since the Gulf War if it really wanted.

In the conspiracy-minded Middle East, many Iraqis bitterly conclude that the United States secretly wants Saddam Hussein in power and Iraq crippled for its own interests—for instance to weaken the Arab vis-a-vis Israel and to persuade states such as Saudi Arabia to spend billions of petrodollars on US weapons.

But if the opposition mistrusts the United States and its



At times, indeed, it has seemed there is a curse on the Iraqi opposition, starting from immediately after the Gulf War. In February and March 1991, after the Iraqi armed forces had been battered by more than a month of allied air assault followed by the lightning ground attack, there was a spontaneous rebellion against Saddam Hussein in both the north and south of the country. To the rebels' astonishment, the allied coalition still occupying the country permitted Saddam Hussein's tanks and helicopter-borne troops to crush the uprising.

At the time, US policy-makers were seized by a fear that Iraq would break apart into separate Kurdish, Shiite and Sunni entities if the uprising succeeded. Few thought Saddam Hussein would be able to hang on to power for long.

Although US leaders often mock Saddam Hussein's "miscalculations," opposition leaders say this was a monumental blunder on the part of then-President Bush. "The international forces could have captured Saddam like catching a mouse," scoffs Mowath. "It would have been that easy."

Another epic defeat came in August 1996 when Iraqi forces pushed into Irbil in Kurdish-run northern Iraq, which had become the main base for the Iraqi National Congress and other groups opposed to Saddam Hussein's rule. Despite promises of protection that the opposition claims to have had personally from US Vice President Al Gore, the United States responded to the Irbil incursion by firing missiles at Iraqi air-defense batteries in the south of the country. Although the

Western allies, there is a parallel wariness on the part of Western governments: They fear placing too much faith on an opposition that over time has seemed ineffectual, complicated and riddled with bickering and divisions.

The two main Kurdish groups in the north, the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, are at one another's throats and both now are seeking accommodations with Baghdad. The Shiite opposition to the south, led by Hakim Bakr's Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, has worried the West because its main support comes from Iran. And both the mainstream pro-democracy Iraqi National Congress, which emphasizes a broad popular uprising, and the Iraqi National Accord, which favors a small military coup, have failed to make noticeable headway against an Iraqi leader who seems able to sniff out plots and unravel dissidents' schemes at will.

Slain soldier's hovel stuns top Israelis

By Lee Hockstader

TEL AVIV—Israel always mourns its fallen warriors with a special intensity. But it wasn't the death of young Sgt. Nikolai Rappaport that has shocked and stunned Israelis since he was killed in Lebanon last weekend. It is what they learned about his life.

Before he joined the army last year, Rappaport, a quiet, friendly 23-year-old Russian immigrant who arrived in Israel three years ago, lived with his father in a one-room hovel adjoining an auto parts depot near the city's old bus station. There is no telephone, no proper window and only a makeshift bed built on planks. A ramshackle courtyard, patchily covered with corrugated tin, is strewn with refuse and strung with neighbors' laundry.

After Rappaport was killed in a Hezbollah ambush Saturday, the dilapidated shack in one of Tel Aviv's oldest and shabbiest neighborhoods was splashed over the evening news and into prosperous Israelis' living rooms. "We stand here embarrassed that we didn't see, didn't hear, didn't ask and didn't know how difficult it was for your family," Tova Nayberg, Rappaport's Hebrew teacher, said at a memorial service for him. Outside Rappaport's Givati Brigade, she was one of the few Israelis who attended the service.

"Among those who paid tribute to Nikolai Rappaport, nobody really knew the truth about his life," said the newspaper Maariv. "Because here one can die like a hero and live like a dog." President Ezer Weizman, who appeared genuinely stunned when he visited the home to pay his respects to Rappaport's father and sister, said: "It is a pity we have come to this point, where a family of a fighter in the Israel Defense Forces is living in such disgraceful conditions."

Russian, Ukrainian and Central Asian immigrants in Rap-

paport's Shapira neighborhood in southern Tel Aviv said if Israelis really had wanted to know about immigrants' problems, they could have known. "As long as nothing happens, people pay absolutely no attention to us," said Nikolai Shelestov, a Russian construction worker in his late twenties who hasn't worked a day since he arrived four months ago.



"There's just a huge wall between immigrants and Israelis." They say, "Come (to Israel), everything's great." said Vassily Chemurin, a thirtyish former farm worker, also unemployed, who is one of Shelestov's seven Russian roommates.

Each pays \$200 monthly for a room in the communal apartment. "Then when you get here you find out it's not so great." Immigrants are helped by an array of government subsidies and supports—a cause of constant grouching by earlier immigrants who had it tougher and say the newcomers are coddled. Still, many recent arrivals have fallen through the cracks.

Nearly 800,000 immigrants from the former Soviet Union—about a seventh of Israel's population—has flooded the country since 1989. While a good many of them are

elderly and live poorly, they also live out of sight of the majority of Israelis.

For many Israelis, it took Nikolai Rappaport and his family to open a peephole into those lives. He arrived with his father, Ilya, from Krasnodar, in southern Russia, three years ago. Nikolai's mother, Klavdiya, remained in Russia. Two months ago his sister Olga, 22, also immigrated to Israel.

For a while the family did all right. Last March, Nikolai Rappaport enlisted in the army, telling personnel officers his family's financial position was "good."

But Ilya, 62, a welder, was laid off last summer. Nikolai applied to the army in September for supplemental support for his family, but was turned down because his father's income—apparently from government benefits and odd jobs—was \$120 over the \$600 monthly maximum allowable.

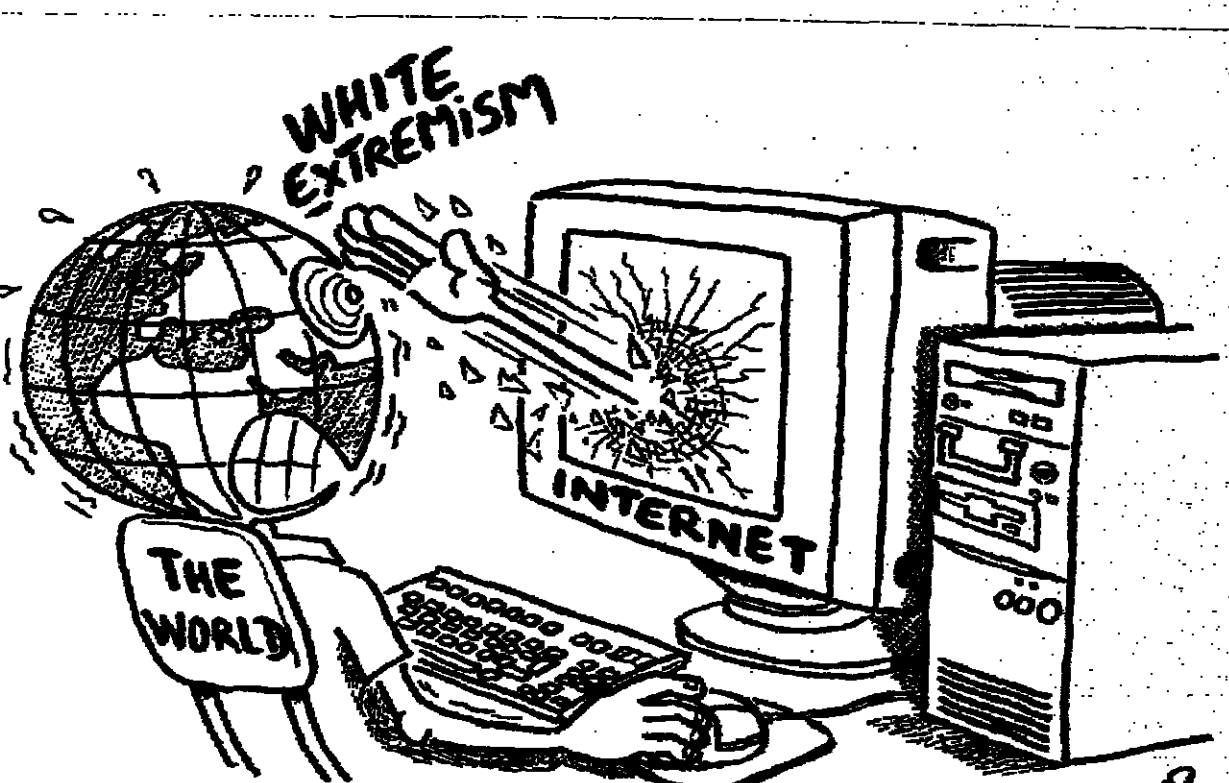
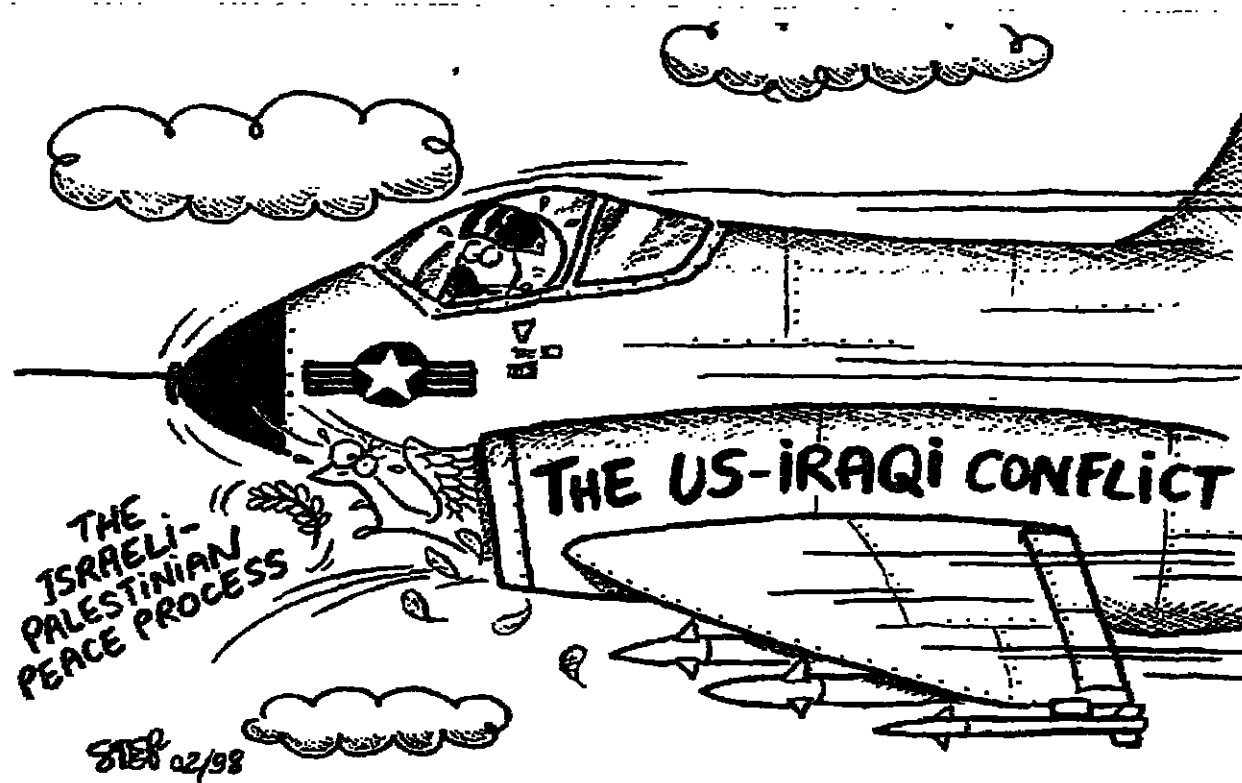
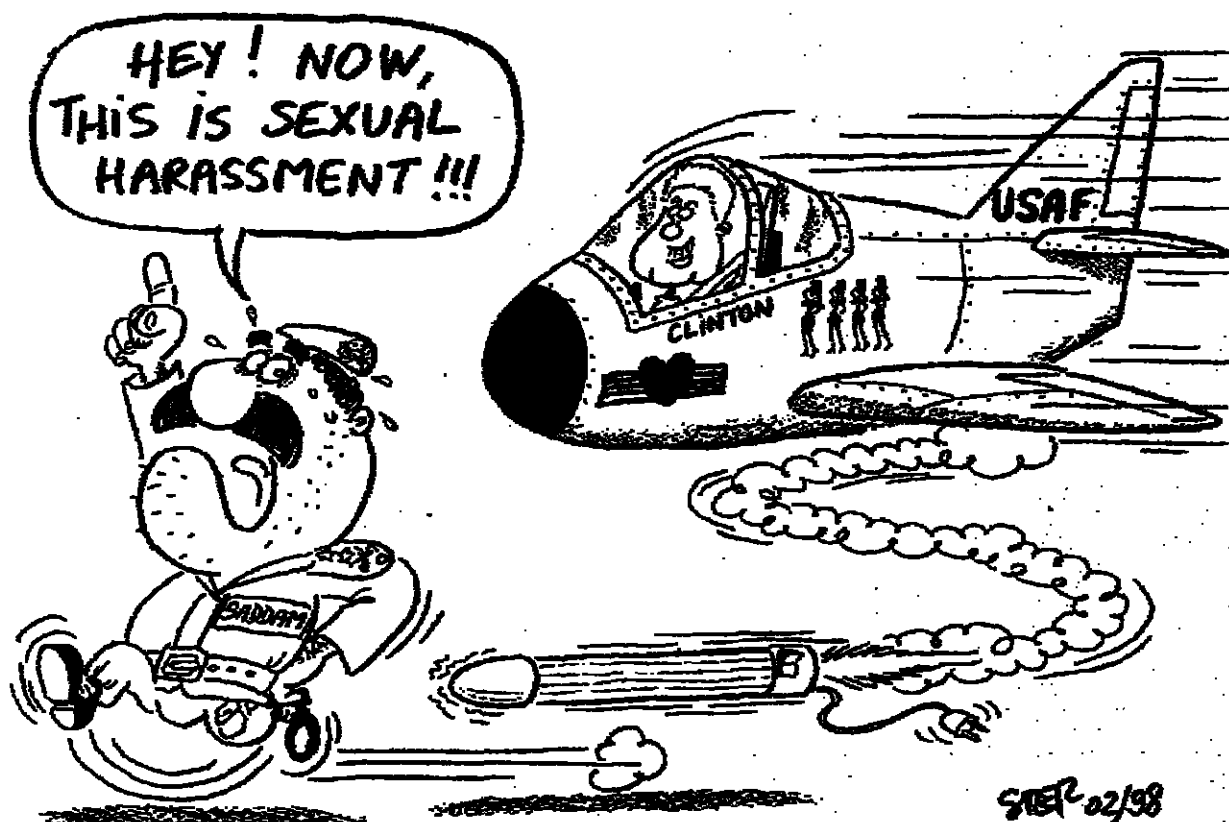
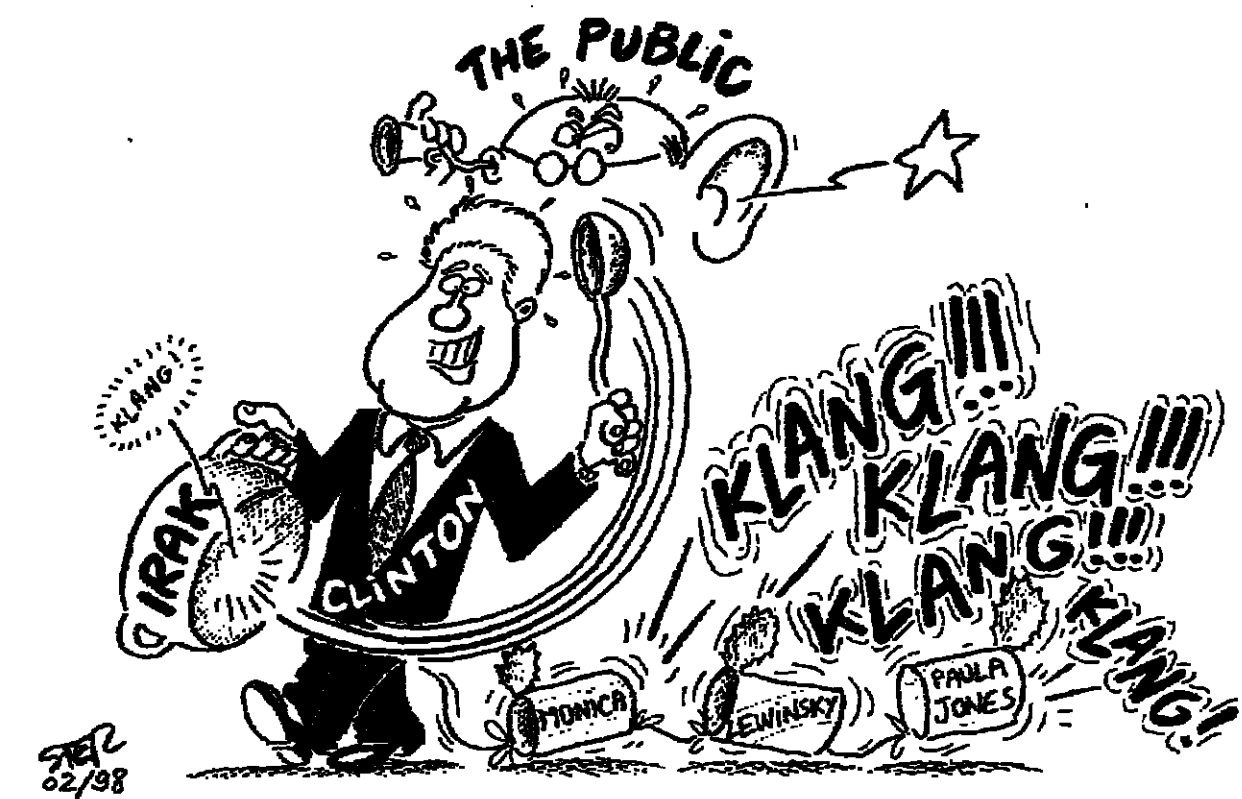
Nikolai, not wanting to worry his father, did not mention his combat unit was serving in the Israeli-occupied portion of southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah fighters have been trying to drive out Israeli forces.

Last weekend he volunteered for a patrol. Rappaport and his comrades were ambushed as they walked single-file just north of the Israeli border before dawn. Seven other Israeli soldiers were injured. After the memorial service in Israel, his body, in a wooden casket covered with an Israeli flag, was flown to Krasnodar for burial. Although he had full Israeli citizenship, Rappaport could not be buried in a Jewish cemetery in Israel because his mother is not Jewish, so by religious law he is not considered Jewish. Wednesday he was laid to rest in Russia. His father, who is Jewish, accompanied the body to Krasnodar. He said he did not know if he would return to Israel.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

The US-Iraq showdown according to Peray

Stephane Peray is an editorial cartoonist living in Bangkok. He contributed these cartoons to The Star



Stephane Peray

Redesigned Audi A6 is a solid, clean ride

By Tom Incantalupo

SOMETIMES, THERE'S a fine line between contentment and boredom, and we found ourselves straddling it in our seven days with Audi's newest model. It's got just about everything available in a modern car to make your trip secure, safe and comfortable—a smooth and powerful engine; a transmission that seems able to read the driver's mind; all-wheel drive; front and side air bags; anti-lock brakes; speed-sensitive, variable-assist power steering; and a superbly solid body well insulated for road noise.

Nether rain nor snow nor gloom of night fazes this car, and none of those will faze you if you're driving it.

There are no unpleasant surprises in store, no matter how bad the road, how tight the turn, how foul the weather. It hangs on, goes where you point it, stays composed and does it all with a dignified manner.

And sometimes a car that does everything well can be boring—at least at anything close to legal speeds—and particularly when, like the A6, its styling is so clean and tasteful that it's generic.

That said, the 1998 A6 model has to be judged a winner, and although it's got some very tough competition, it's worth considering.

On sale since November, the redesigned A6 is the mid-level of Audi's three models in this country, slotted between the A4 and the A8. It's also the newest. Audi says its wheelbase is longer and its interior room has been increased this year—most importantly, for rear seaters, who now have 2.1 inches more leg room.

The new A6 competes against mid-priced luxury models such as the Lexus GS 300 and Mercedes-Benz E320.

Just in case Audi has confused you with its seemingly unending name changes, the A6 descends from what used to be called the A100 sedans.

Although its engine is on the small side, for a six-cylinder, it has five valves per cylinder and delivers better than adequate power for standing-start acceleration or highway passing.

But its low-end torque is on the borderline, and you might want to test-drive an A6 before you decide whether to order the all-wheel-drive system, which adds 231 pounds to the car's weight, and, according to Audi's estimates, half a second to the front-wheel-drive version's 8.8-second zero-to-60-mph acceleration time.

The five-speed automatic transmission can be shifted manually, thanks to its Tip-tronic feature.

Other standard items for the A6 base price of \$33,750 include automatic, dual-zone climate control, dual-power front seats, tilt and telescoping steering column, remote keyless entry, trip computer, a split folding rear seat-back, headlight washers and heated nozzles for the windshield wipers.

Need more security and comfort? Order the \$750 cold-weather package, consisting of a ski storage sack in



the rear seat-back and heated front seats and steering wheel. Or you can opt for leather seat upholstery for \$1,550. Also for \$1,500 there's a package consisting of glass sunroof, automatically dimming outside rearview mirror, a memory system for the driver's seat and outside rearview mirrors. Or for \$1,300 you can get a Bose premium sound system with trunk-mounted CD changer.

With those options, our tester was sticker-priced at \$41,225, with freight.

Two other options you should consider are side-impact air bags for rear seaters, for \$950, packaged with more focused, bliner and more glare-free xenon headlamps. Audi says the latter produce three times more light than halogens, while using less power and lasting longer.

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The key-fob remote controls unlock the trunk but don't pop the lid open, as in most American and Japanese cars. Even when you use the key, opening the trunk is a two-step process of unlocking, then releasing the lid, a minor annoyance when your arms are full of packages.

And on some bumpy roads there was more noise and harshness from the tester's low profile 195/65 H-rated tires on 15-inch wheels than one might find acceptable in a luxury car.

A pleasant holdover from Audi's dark years following the "unintended acceleration" controversy of the late '80s: The Audi Advantage warranty that includes three years or 50,000 miles of free scheduled maintenance and three years' worth of roadside assistance.

That and a line of terrific cars has helped this unit of Volkswagen AG recover slowly in this decade. Though Audi is still a bit player in

this country compared to Mercedes, Lexus and the domestic luxury makes Cadillac and Lincoln, its sales last year were approaching triple the level of the bottom it had hit in 1991.

That's good for Audi and its dealers, of course, but it's also good for the rest of us, because more competition means that the cars available to us have to keep getting better and better.

The new A6 is proof of that, whether or not you find driving it exciting or mundane. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Data on '98 Audi A6 Quattro

ENGINE: 2.8-liter V-6, 200-horsepower
Transmission: Five-speed automatic, all-wheel drive
Safety: Dual front and side-impact air bags, four-wheel disc brakes, anti-lock, pre-tensioning seat belts, head restraint and lap/shoulder belt for center rear passenger, front and rear fog lamps.
Place of Assembly: Neckarsulm, Germany.
Weight: 3,794 pounds
Trunk: 15.4 cubic feet
Price as Driven: \$41,225, including destination charge.
EPA Mileage: 17 mpg city, 26 highway.

Travel

The bride who is wedded to tradition

By Krishna Guha

THE UNLOVELY city of Bombay is garlanded with flowers. Grooms on white horses weave their way unsteadily through the traffic, accompanied by boisterous bands of trumpeters and drummers. They take their seats beneath giant movie-set facades of temples and palaces. Fireworks streak the sky. It is wedding season.

Marital mania reached its climax on the last Monday of January, wedding day for tens of thousands of couples across the country.

January 26 is an auspicious time in the ancient Hindu astrological calendar and, not coincidentally, India's Republic day.

"You celebrate the country's freedom by giving up your own," or so the saying goes.

As India hurried to wed, there was ample evidence that in the big cities, marriage, like so many Indian institutions, has adopted some of the trappings of the west. Boutiques advertise the latest fashion in bridal dress; travel companies offer honeymoons in Europe or the US; and "second, third or fourth honeymoons" for those celebrating anniversaries.

New glossy magazines capitalise on the serious spending. "We look at beauty, jewellery, fashion for bride and groom, honeymoon travel, and give practical advice on wedding

customs," says J. Mila Terry, editor of Bride and Home, India's first marriage magazine, launched last year.

But scratch the surface and you find that traditional values are alive and well. Few Indians, even 50 years after independence, marry outside their own caste or religion; arranged marriages predominate, even in the cities; and the practice of dowries is actually increasing.

This was not supposed to happen. Generations of reformers predicted that India's old social habits would die out as it became more urban and developed.

"My sister married outside our caste, but my mother was opposed to it at first. We had to say, mum, it is her life, let her choose," says Rajesh Kelkar, a financial analyst in Bombay.

In the matter of materialism, Indian traditions have evolved to accommodate changing times and western influences. Middle class families now demand a Bajaj scooter, Godrej fridge or BPL television as part of the dowry; such goods pick up markedly during the marriage season.

And brides and grooms have a more active role in arranging a match, including, in most cases, the right to veto their parents' selection.

At the same time, a distinctive elite Indian wedding is emerging—under the influence

of new commercial wealth and the glamour of Bollywood, India's film industry. Ceremonies that are thousands of years old are receiving the attentions of set designers, and light and sound engineers.

This style has spread from cities to provincial towns. The Marchal family in Aurangabad, for instance, recently spent about Rs1m (£15,750) on their son's wedding, catering for almost 1,000 guests amid romantic statues, fountains and a set worthy of a mid-budget film. This is serious money; a manual worker in India earns about Rs30 (50p) a day.

Kamala Ganesh, who lectures on marriage, family and kin at Bombay university, says Indian weddings have always been "a display of social status and an opportunity for social advancement."

But she believes the modern Indian press, which reports celebrity weddings with breathless enthusiasm, has helped spread the practice to communities that do not have any tradition of grand weddings or big dowries. "We are seeing the standardisation of wedding practices," she says.

Indian taste in marriage can be seen in the pages of the Sunday newspaper match-making columns. The advertisements are read by middle class parents rigorously, at times to the point of comedy.

"Alliance invited for very beautiful sharp-featured slim 27 165cm Punjabi Khatri girl B.Com B.Ed. Cultured high status rich family vegetarian teetotaler preferred."

"Alliance invited from cultured educated Bengali Kayastha family very fair, good-looking, height not less than 157cm having minimum qualification and aptitude for Higher Education."

The same phrases keep cropping up. A bride should be "fair" or "wheatish" in complexion and, best of all, "convened/educated in one of India's prestige girls' schools founded by missionaries in

By Michael Church

LET THOSE who relish psychological parallels chew on this: Beethoven, Salvador Dal and Napoleon Bonaparte each grew up in the shadow of an elder brother of the same name who died in infancy. This poignant coincidence may have escaped Frank McLynn's notice but, following Freud, he speculates vigorously on how being a "replacement son" could have affected Napoleon's behavior. Napoleon was obsessed by rivalry with his living brother Joseph, but ended up showering him with undeserved gifts and favors; his fraternal aggression became redirected at whichever unfortunates Spaniards, Egyptians, Russians, Prussians later qualified as the "enemy".

McLynn's previous biography was of C.G. Jung, so it is no surprise to find Napoleon on the couch. In this portrait he emerges as a compulsive sadist, with a whip across the face for servants, and a kick in the groin for generals; he shot his wife Josephine's pet swans, masturbated before battle, and ordered mass executions when he felt his authority challenged.

His amatory style was premature ejaculation, but he was a compulsive worrier; he bedded, he humiliated his lovers by making them wait outside his room all night, and got a buzz out of pouring coffee over their elegant clothes.

He suffered from fits and chronic eczema, and was addicted to searingly hot baths. He had a horror of cats, and of open doors. If at any moment he decided his clothes were constricting him, he would tear them off, throw them on the fire, and berate the servant who had laid them out for him to wear. He had an alter ego whom he called the Little Red Man, and whom he regarded as his protector in battle. Napoleon was by any standards a suitable case for psychoanalytical treatment.

There are moments when McLynn gets carried away taking Napoleon's reference to men "left on the field of battle" as meaning the men he had cuckolded but the central analysis is powerfully convincing. McLynn deals perceptively and sympathetically with the boy's early formation at his military academy, where he was a lone wolf with Promethean ambitions, regularly picked on for his poverty, scrawny looks and stubborn Corsican pride.

But this is essentially a story about mothers and fathers. McLynn identifies four key paternal images in the young Napoleon's mind: Louis VI, the Corsican leader Paoli, his father Carlo, and the Comte de Marbeuf who cuckolded Carlo with the man's shamefully willing connivance. All were betrayers; all were sloughed off. McLynn believes a world of infant mistrust lay behind that pithy and mysterious clause in the

Code Napoleon: "Investigation of paternity is forbidden."

The Oedipal significance of Napoleon's relationship with his magnetic and wayward mother Letizia is incontrovertible. At 26, rich, famous, powerful Napoleon could have had almost any woman in Paris. What possessed him, asks McLynn, "to marry a penniless Creole, six years his elder and with fading looks?" McLynn underestimates her singular seductiveness, but argues persuasively that her promiscuity was the key.

"Josephine, the unfaithful mother," satisfied all the deep drives in the Napoleonic unconscious. The Emperor may have later traded his first wife in for a younger, child-bearing model, but he remained emotionally faithful to her to the end.

This psychoanalytical thread underpins a skilful political portrait. McLynn shows how Napoleon followed Corsican tradition by sharing the spoils of victory with his turbulent family, but shows how he departed from that tradition by not pursuing vendettas. Napoleon's killings were usually for reasons of state; he was absurdly forgiving towards inveterate personal enemies.

He had Trotsky's impetuosity, rather than Stalin's grim patience, or Franco's systematic

vengefulness; there was no Napoleonic Night of the Long Knives, no Napoleonic Great Terror. McLynn does not claim to have written a definitive biography: Napoleon is his valiant attempt to synthesise what is known. Some sections are superb, others are run-of-the-mill. The economic chapters read like academic monographs, the battle-accounts praising tactics and pinpointing blunders in the sort of detail which will bore all but battle-tactics enthusiasts. Napoleon's peculiar genius is exhaustively analysed, as is the extent to which he benefited from accidents of history. The book really takes wing with the preposterous goings-on among the Bonaparte family, and the Verdian drama of the Russian campaign.

With a multifaceted subject like Napoleon, the answer may be to tackle him in bite-sized chunks. Timothy Wilson-Smith's recent Napoleon and His Artists is a case in point, brilliantly illuminating things which McLynn has perforce to canter past at speed. On the other hand, Alan Palmer's elegantly-written Napoleon in Russia (with the same cover-picture as McLynn) conveys less than Napoleon does of the horrors the French had to endure. "What a novel, anyhow, my life has been!" said the Emperor on his ultimate rock. Well, Tolstoy adopted that approach, and his work had its own limitations. With Napoleon, there is always more to come. ■

Financial Times Syndication



colonial times.

She must, of course, be "very beautiful," but also highly educated. No urban middle class Indian family would seek a bride without a university degree, a post-graduate degree is better still.

"The ideal husband must be 'professionally qualified' with a post-graduate degree. Doctors and engineers are most prized. Computer software programmers are increasingly hot property and the biggest catch of all a boy 'having Green Card' and the right to work in the US. Male appearance is not an issue."

The Times of India alone publishes between 8,000 and 15,000 such advertisements a month, peaking in the months between October (the end of the monsoon) and January (allowing time for a wedding before the next monsoon). Until 1991, the newspaper

simply headed its columns "Brides Wanted" and "Grooms Wanted."

Today, brides and grooms are categorised by caste, religion, region and profession. The pagesix or eight of them now have separate headings for different castes.

"We found that our readers were searching in these categories already," says one newspaper executive.

"However secular we like to think we are, when it comes to an arranged marriage we stick to our own community feeling that the chances of compatibility are higher."

There are some signs of change. While most parents classify their children under the main heading of their caste, they like to identify them in sub-categories too: Bengali to Bengali, doctor to doctor. Less than 10 per cent choose to list by caste only.

Moreover, an increasing number of advertisements declare "caste no bar". Others "sub-caste no bar". Some specify "no dowry". There is a column in some newspapers titled "Sans Dowry" (without dowry). But these remain a minority.

And while no newspaper will print a demand for dowry, they all know that phrases such as "alliance invited from a well-settled family" mean the bride's parents must be in a position to pay up.

Even so, westernisation has been superficial, insists A. R. Momin, head of sociology at Bombay university: "Some values have been adopted, others diluted and compromised. The trappings have been adopted but not the spirit." ■

Financial Times Syndication

CHARLIE

"Charlie—good news! The Board of Directors has granted you tenure!"

The Star
Arabia's political, economic and financial daily

Online

<http://star.arabia.com>

05.01.1998



Queen Noor honors award winner

HER MAJESTY Queen Noor Monday honored Mr. Najeh Abu Zein, who won the award of the European-Mediterranean Partnership Competition for young writers, at the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF).

Mr. Najeh's script named "Intersection Area" portrays the conflict between those who are secluded, introverted and isolated from other cultures for purely religious and cultural differences and others who are not. It stresses the unity and intercommunication.



Ancient collection

A gift for today

By Kofi Attah
Special to The Star

Art for the dilettante is what today's exhibitions should be all about. Mamdouh Bisharat's private collection, "Vision and Identity," is an elegant rich comprehensive display that is currently going at the Darat al Funun. Indeed it is a testimony to what art should be all about.

"Vision and Identity" is a special presentation of Bisharat's collection stretching over a long time. The exhibition commemorates his 60th birthday and preaches a message of peace and co-existence. It shows just a selection of works of arts and objects he acquired during the last three decades.

With the combination of his own sweat and incentives, Bisharat has, against all odds, collected high quality art pieces and objects of renowned Arab and international artists, most of whom he met personally.

What is unique about this exhibit is that it is an exhibition without boundaries. Bisharat reconciles two opposites and cohabits them. For example, he displays both Islamic values and Christian civilization in the different halls of the gallery. Motivated by his deep love for this country, he shares Jordan's cultural heritage with those who share his collection and brings people of various horizons together.

Born 60 years ago he comes from a family with deep-rooted traditions in the city of Salt and Um El Kumzum, having spent his boyhood in Mukheibeh, in the north overlooking the Yarmouk River.

The Bisharat family had for generations been involved in trade and commerce with Jerusalem, Cairo, Beirut and Damascus as well as with European capitals.

After his University education England in the sixties, he came back to continue the family business but this did not prevent him from carrying on with his dedication to art. In his "Vision and Identity," displaying over 200 exhibits, he becomes a vehicle for preaching peaceful co-existence as seen in the halls called Jerusalem and the Arab.

In the hall the visitor sees a church wall hanging thirteenth station of the cross composed of plaster, hand colored, probably by European craftsman. The wall bears an inscription "Jesus Est Descendu De La



Cross (Jesus stepped down from the cross). It comes from an old Jerusalem church.

Not far from the wall is a stain glass depicting a saint by Pizzol, 1989. A copy of the holy Bible by Gelkie, titled "The Holy land

and the Holy Bible" is also seen around there.

In the Arab hall, there are Arab/Islamic documents. A book on Arabic proverbs translated into the Turkish language, another book with the opening verses from the Holy Quran

and another one titled "Manuscripts of the Holy Quran, dating from between the 18th and 19th century. But there is also many other items on Islam that are on display.

The visitor is welcomed to the gallery by a well preserved 1876 first edition of the Egyptian *Al Ahran* newspaper in a glass case. Behind the entrance hall where an illuminated painting by Princess Fahrentaissa Zaid, is a giant book entitled *Egypt and Nubia* by David Roberts in 1876, a renowned Orientalist at the time. Bisharat brought the two volumes in Oxford in 1959 for five guineas.

In this section of the gallery are more books of exceptional value. For instance, the *Pictorial Palestine* edited by Colonel Sir Charles Wilson and *Description of a Journey to Arabia and other neighbouring lands* by Carsten Niebuhr, 1778 (in old German). A *View of the Temple of Baalbeck*, etc.

In the Mukheibeh hall at the extreme end of the gallery are authentic sculptures and antiquities of all sorts, this include a century-old telephone, while there are various documents exhibiting old maps of the Arabian world. To the extreme end of the gallery is a giant portrait presented to Bisharat in the late '80s by the Australian Ambassador, his Mr Bowker, a copy of the original painting of his late father, Shihbi Bisharat which was housed in the war museum, Canberra, Australia. It is the painting of a Palestinian with mustache, hair plaited at front, heavy eyebrows and Arab headress.

Mamdouh Bisharat, a multi-lingual, has a wide collection of paintings, sculptures, hooks, prints, textile stamps and artifacts by famous artists, photographers, writers such as Luigi Mayer, Andrei Zvelasky, Daphe Allison whom he commissioned to paint his father's portrait.

No wonder he is a dedicated to the Royal Society For Fine Arts and is an active member of the Jordan National Gallery of Arts. He is not only a collector of valuable objects but a preserver and a promoter. He has initiated a lot of archaeological projects in Jordan and helped preserved many historical sites. His "Vision and Identity" is an inspiration and for long time will capture the imagination of not only Jordanians and Arabs but all art lovers.

The exhibition continues till 5th March at the Darat al Funun in Jabal al Weibdeh. ■

Afkar Promoseven win in London International Advertising awards

AFKAR PROMOSEVEN, the leading advertising agency in the Middle East, has received the Finalist Award in the 1997 London International Advertising Awards, it was announced today. The award was for a Television Commercial for Ted Lapidus fragrance for men.

The London International Advertising Awards annually honours the world's most creative television / cinema commercials, radio commercials, print advertising and package design. Entries are judged by a panel of over 100 of the world's leading advertising professionals. This year's competition received 15,870 entries from 78 countries. Winners are judged on the level of creativity only.

Afkar Promoseven was represented at the awards ceremony by Mr. Fares Abouhamad and Mr. Wassim Merheby. Mr. Chris Hill of the Sara Corporation, Afkar's client, was also present to claim the trophy.

Mr. Fadi Salameh Executive Vice President C.O.O. of Afkar Promoseven, said, "Every year Afkar strives to establish even higher creative standards. It is gratifying to know that we have been recognised at the highest levels for our creativity and dedication." ■



Muskat plays at Radisson SAS Amman

NEW IN town! The Wings Club Bar located at the newly renovated Radisson SAS Hotel Amman proudly announces Live Piano Entertainment by Thomas Muskat. Muskat entertains from Saturday to Thursday. Thomas Muskat is an experienced, brilliant pianist/entertainer, who was born and raised in a musical atmosphere in Hungary. Since 1966 he has been living permanently in Oslo, Norway. A classical trained musician, who beside playing the piano plays both the organ and the keyboard. He speaks fluent Norwegian (Scandinavian), English, German and of course Hungarian. ■



Quarter century of teaching

AFTER MORE than a quarter of a century of continual giving, the Modern Language Center (MLC) offers people a condensed experience in teaching English in a modern way as to suit students, businessmen, and employees of official organizations.

Scores of thousands have drawn from the MLC well and proceeded to contribute positively to the welfare of the local community as well as their personal benefit and development. The Center offers efficient methodology and a comfortable atmosphere. No other center has what we provide.

The MLC offers also colloquial Arabic courses. The Arabic courses is scheduled to start on Saturday, 21 February.

There will be a ten-minute sessions break between. The course will last for one month. The course is carefully designed to meet the needs of the learner. ■



Levi's Brand USA names TBWA Chiat/Day national advertising agency

SAN FRANCISCO—The Levi's Brand USA has named TBWA Chiat/Day as its national advertising agency after a review initiated last October. TBWA Chiat/Day will immediately assume its role as the Levi's brand's marketing partner.

"Some of the world's top agencies participated in this review and we were extremely impressed with their strategic and creative thinking they presented," said Gordon D. Shank, president, Levi Strauss & Co., Americas. "In the end, TBWA Chiat/Day demonstrated a deep understanding of the Levi's brand and the strongest recommendations for taking it forward. This partnership with TBWA Chiat/Day will inject new vigor into our efforts to build the Levi's brand and ensure its strength and relevance well into the future."

Also participating in the review

were Foote, Cone & Belding, San Francisco, Bartle Bogle Hegarty, London, BRDO Worldwide, Los Angeles and New York City, and Hal Riney & Partners, San Francisco.

Foote, Cone & Belding, the incumbent, retains Levi Strauss & Co.'s Dockers and States brands as clients. Bartle Bogle Hegarty will continue to handle Levi's brand advertising in Europe and Asia.

Levi Strauss & Co. is the world's largest branded apparel manufacturer with record sales of \$7.1 billion in 1996. This company markets Levi's jeans, Dockers Khakis and States dress pants.

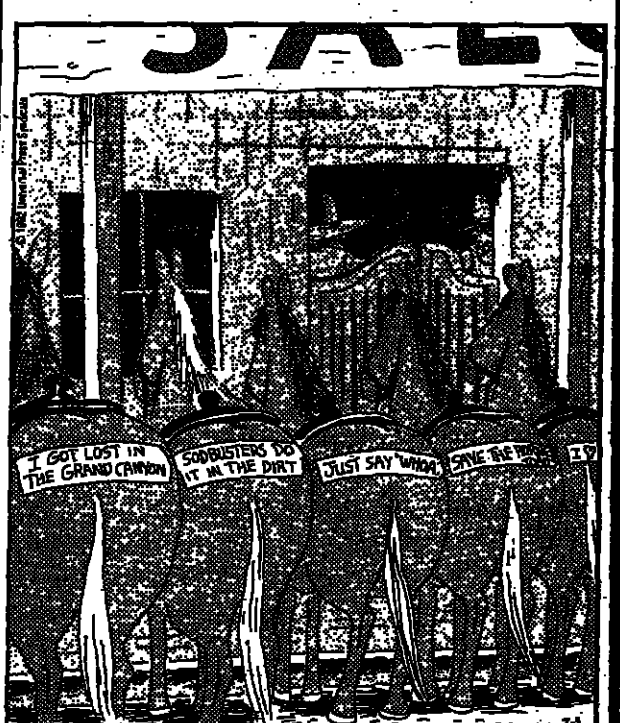
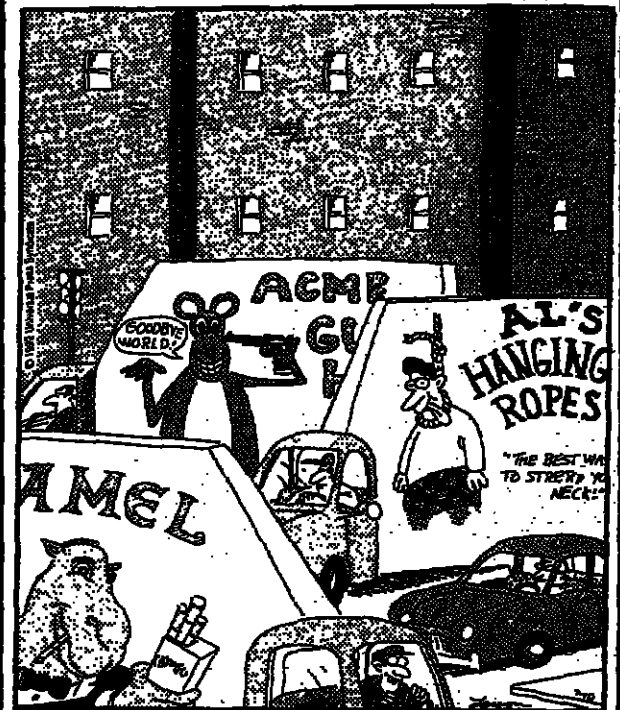
TBWA Chiat/Day are represented in the Middle East by the "Intermarkets Advertising network" with offices in Beirut, Damascus, Amman, Cairo, Riyadh, Jeddah, Kuwait, Bahrain and Dubai. ■

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



Red Cloud's ultimate nightmare



Common butt stickers of the Old West



"Frankly, sir, we like co-signers to be sober."

SLAPSTIX
Ignorance gives one a large range of probabilities.

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The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 21 - 28 February

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—The Hammerman
4:30—French Program
5:00—Canon The Adventurer
6:00—Square One
6:30—Neighbours
7:00—News in French
7:15—Discovering Magazine
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Prism
9:10—Time Trax
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film: *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, starring: Tom Hanks, Bruce Willis
12:00—The Respected Family

SUNDAY

4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—Cartoon
4:30—Konan the Adventurer
5:00—Don't Dream
6:00—Skippy
7:00—News in French
7:15—A Tour in France
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—American Funniest
8:00—Killing for Living
8:30—People and Places in Africa
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—North And South
11:10—The Upper Hand

MONDAY

4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—Cartoon
4:30—Konan the Adventurer
5:00—Tallasa
6:00—Riding High
6:30—Neighbours
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs



NBA Games, Thursday at 5:00 pm

7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Hope And Gloria
8:00—Perspective
8:30—American Chart Show
9:10—The Burned Bridge
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Law & Order
11:10—Baywatch Nights

TUESDAY

4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—CRO
4:30—Konan the Adventurer
5:00—Small Talk
6:00—Border Town
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—A Whole New Ball game

WEDNESDAY

4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—Mr Bogus
4:30—French Programs
5:00—The Finder
6:00—Neighbours
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Campus Cops
8:00—The Nature of Healing
8:30—Hollywood



Amman cinemas

- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Seven Years in Tibet
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): I Know What You Did Last Summer
- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): 007... Tomorrow Never Dies
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): The Brady Bunch
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): Nothing To Lose
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): Risala Ila Al Wali (Arabic)
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): Mr. Bean

Remembers
8:30—History Makers
9:00—Filler
9:10—Kung Fu
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Ellis Island
11:10—Country Music

THURSDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—The Dinky Di's
2:30—The Prince And The Pauper
2:45—Energy Express
2:55—Animal Show
3:00—French Programs
5:00—NBA
6:00—Marker
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Big Brother Jake
8:00—Trial Pursuit
8:30—Dr. Quinn The Medicine Woman
9:10—The Oprah Winfrey Show
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film: *Frame Up*
12:00—Never the Twain

FRIDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Teddy Ruxpin
2:30—French Programs
5:00—Lucky Luke
5:30—Blue Water Dreaming
6:00—Tarzan
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—F.R.I.E.N.D.S
8:00—Life on the Internet
8:30—The Album Show
9:10—Adventures of Brisco County
10:00—News At Ten

10:30—The Beast (Drama)

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI

16:30—Conan l'aventurier
17:00—Cajou
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine L'œuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE

16:30—Conan l'aventurier
17:00—Magazine Fant pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Le Tour de France

LUNDI

16:30—Conan l'aventurier
17:00—Thalassa
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine scientifique Cinq sur cinq

MARDI

16:30—Conan l'aventurier
17:00—Savoir plus santé
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Têtes chercheuses

MERCREDI

16:30—Conan l'aventurier
17:00—Ushuaia
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E=M6

JEUDI

15:00—Qui est qui
15:30—Surprise party
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Atomes crochus

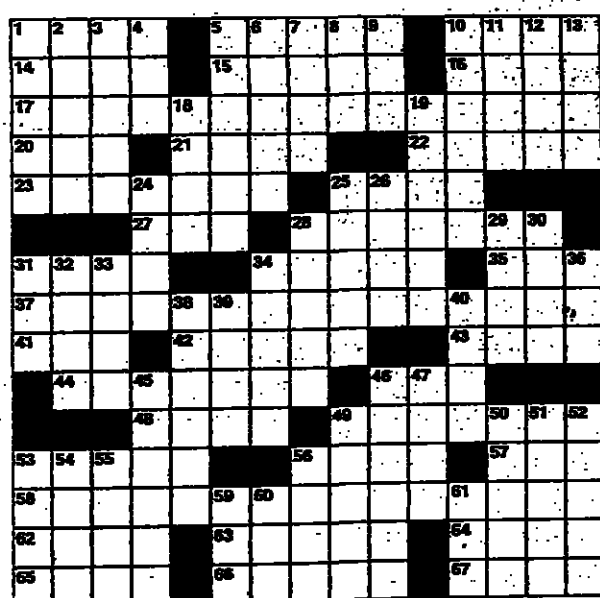
VENDREDI

15:00—Qui est qui
15:30—Julie Lescaut
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Allô la Terre

Programs are subject to change by JTV



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS
- 1 Bar bills
5 Oozing
10 Taj Mahal
14 Omnium-gatherum
15 Check recipient
16 Daytime TV
17 Fabled pair
20 Conclusion
21 Scott
22 Houston player
23 Run
25 Gimpy
27 Museum display
28 On pension
31 Ah! me!
34 Church creed
35 Tilt
37 Celestial pair
41 Ambulance
- DOWN
- 1 Lugged
2 Singly
3 Hitchhock
4 Tippler
5 Elan
6 Artist's stand
7 Locked over
8 Pod seed
9 Desire
10 More palled
11 Soccer
12 Unusual
13 Mimic
18 Bouquet
19 Falsely
24 History
25 Furnishes temporarily
26 Upon
28 Talks wildly
29 First name in mystery
30 Gloomy
31 Perfect shot
32 Barryard baby
33 Nick and Noat's
34 Wove a
35 Alphabet
36 Clansy
39 Hold away
40 Pre-Easter season
45 Parade
46 Joined with glue
47 Wallet bills
49 Indian feast
50 Ahead of time
51 Beamish
52 Giggling sound
53 Eagle call
54 Tattered
55 Boast
56 Make tests
59 Filing
60 Feline noise
61 Abet

—THIS WEEK'S—
HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: We've got a shift from super intellectual to compassionate and emotional. If you're in the arts, you're going to do better after the sun goes into Pisces.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Watch for a financial opportunity. You could find a way to turn your money into lots more through the use of somebody else's.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). If you need a loan or scholarship, make your applications now. You'll be making all kinds of new friends soon. One of them, at least, could seem like a soul mate.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). You will perform brilliantly. The lesson you're learning has more to do with intuition than obedience. You'll be tested on both.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). It looks like you'd rather stay home in bed. Your enthusiasm starts to pick up, however.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). It looks like education goes easily, so get a report written. You'll be able to find the information you need.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). These are good days for taking care of financial matters, including gathering up money somebody else owes you.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Make a commitment to a loved one. Your workload increases. You'll also notice your chances for making money are improving.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You'll be in power, except for a few minor irritations coming from your home environment. You're strong but still frustrated.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A team effort should pay off pretty well. Study the manual to fix something at home. You'll want to spend more time at home. You might be feeling hassled.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). This week starts out kind of rough, with orders barked from an older person. Things get better as the week goes along, as friends show up to play.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Make a connection with a distant friend. You need the information and support.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Your luck is definitely starting to improve. You'll notice that things get better.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: The first part of this year looks good for travel, but after that you're going to have to get back down to business.

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PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LITAP

NOICT

LIKALA

ENCAME



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: THE "O O O" O O O O

Answer: PLAIT TONIC ALKALI MENACE
What the new wave considered the popular hotel

Words of Wisdom

If you don't like free discussion, you value your opinion more than the truth.

The beginning of certainty is doubt.

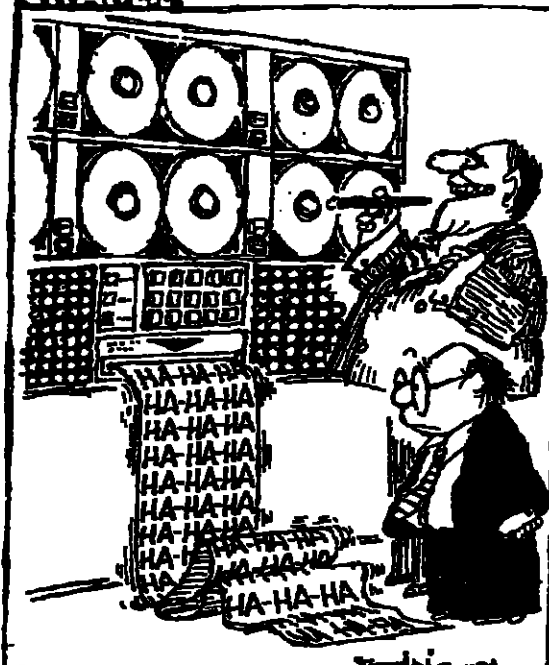
Playing for safety can be the most dangerous thing in the world.

Meeting: A place where people talk about what they should be doing.

It is better to have one person working with you than three who work for you.

There is no reason to succeed if you can live comfortably as a failure.

CHARLIE



"You hear that, Exatron 8? He wants a raise!"

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Le Jourdain

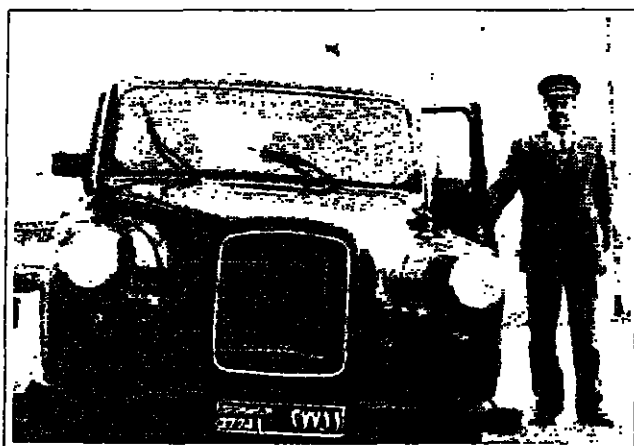
Supplément en français du Star

Découverte

Être une star en taxi

L'angoisse vous saisit quand vous montez dans un taxi à Amman ou les marques japonaises vous blâment ? Voici deux nouveaux moyens tape-à-l'œil d'être conduit d'un bout à l'autre de la ville.

Uniforme gris et casquette impeccable, un homme vous ouvre avec respect la portière. Vous pénétrez alors dans l'intérieur d'un véhicule haut de gamme : raffinement, confort et sobriété. Les banquettes sont en cuir travaillé à la main, le tableau de bord en ronce de noyer. Le chauffeur d'une quarantaine d'années ouvre la vitre de séparation : « Madame, dans quinze minutes, nous serons à l'agence », annonce-t-il dans un sourire et un « perfect » anglais. Partis du septième cercle d'Amman où la voiture, n'a pas manqué de faire sensation, nous roulons vers Al Yaddouh, sur la route de l'aéroport. A notre passage, les badauds se retournent brusquement, le doigt tendu et l'air hébété. Ce n'est pas tous les jours en Jordanie que l'on peut voir des taxis londoniens, modèle des années 1920 ou 50. C'est une compagnie anglaise, Asquith, qui a eu l'idée de fabriquer ces vieux taxis qui combinent la séduction surannée de l'ancien et les performances du monde moderne (télévision, fax, CD-Rom, cellule à bord). « J'ai eu l'idée de choisir ce type de véhicules pour donner à la Jordanie une image de progrès », explique Hasan Abu Jaber, le propriétaire de l'agence qui a acheté ces taxis très « british » pour les mettre au service des Jordanais qui veulent rouler des mécaniques (mariés, hommes d'affaires) et surtout des nombreux touristes de passage dans le royaume. « Apporter un service de transport de qualité est important ici, ajoute le propriétaire, il y a encore des personnes qui continuent à penser que nous sommes un pays non civilisé où le dromadaire est le seul moyen



Qui n'a jamais rêvé de se prendre pour un lord anglais ?

de locomotion ». À 15 dinars de l'heure, 95 la journée, le tacot des années 50 reste une mécanique de luxe.

Autre folie véhiculaire à Amman : le taxi de Yousef El-Isidi. Dans les rues de la capitale, au milieu des belles japonaises et des tas de clous, sa grosse Mercedes 190 jaune a de quoi surprendre. Cela change des Mercedes préhistoriques, transformées depuis 20 ans en services. Plutôt fier de son originalité, le jeune homme explique qu'il a bénéficié d'une aide des pouvoirs publics pour acheter son bolide. Une loi prévoit en effet que le gouvernement reprenne les taxis âgés de moins de cinq ans pour permettre aux propriétaires d'en acquiescer des neufs avec des délais de paiement avantageux. Une procédure beaucoup plus rapide que de passer par le marché des particuliers.

« Il y a un an que j'ai cette voiture. Au début c'était un peu difficile car j'avais peu de clients », raconte Yousef El-Isidi et sa Mercedes jaune au 07933507.

sont satisfaits de mon service ». Les amateurs de belles voitures l'appellent sur son cellulaire et lui demandent de venir les chercher à tel ou tel endroit. Outre la course proprement dite, Yousef facture le déplacement. Mais il lui arrive aussi de prendre des clients sans rendez-vous au hasard des bras tendus dans la rue. Et là surprise, le compteur défile de la même manière que dans les boîtes à sardines les plus rouillées de la capitale. « Pour moi, insiste encore Yousef, c'est important de donner une nouvelle image de notre pays, j'avais envie de détruire la mauvaise réputation des chauffeurs de taxis ».

Amineh Ishtay

● Vous êtes tendance « Années folles » : Agence Najla au 41262379
● Vous préférez le luxe et le charme des belles Allemandes : Yousef El-Isidi et sa Mercedes jaune au 07933507.

La guerre : plus difficile à programmer que des vacances

Les Etats-Unis qui sont capables de frapper l'Irak à n'importe quel moment, doivent cependant tenir compte des Jeux Olympiques de Nagano, des fêtes musulmanes, des vacances du Congrès et même des phases de la lune. « La fenêtre de lancement (d'une attaque contre l'Irak) se situe entre le 24 février et le 15 mars », estime un diplomate européen. Le Congrès est parti en vacances jusqu'au 24 février sans avoir voté de résolution de soutien à une opération militaire. La Maison blanche estime pouvoir se passer d'une autorisation formelle mais préférerait avoir l'appui public des législateurs. C'est à la mi-mars que les musulmans du monde entier commenceront à converger vers la Mecque pour le pèlerinage sur les lieux saints de l'islam. Or, un musulman doit s'abstenir de tout acte de violence pendant le Hadj. Les experts s'accordent à exclure une opération pendant ce temps sacré. Ensuite Bill Clinton (notre photo) doit effectuer sa première visite en Afrique à partir du 22 mars et jusqu'au 2 avril. Le New York Times faisait remarquer lundi que le président et son épouse Hillary ont prévu de rendre visite à leur fille Chelsea à l'université de Stanford du 25 février au 1er mars. Le quotidien a aussi vérifié le calendrier lunaire : les bombardiers américains seront moins justifiés les jours de pleine lune, ce qui exclut les 26 février et 28 mars. C'est dans les deux ou trois jours précédant et suivant ces deux dates que la nuit sera la plus noire au Proche-Orient. Enfin concernant la trêve olympique des Jeux d'hiver au Japon qui s'achève dimanche prochain, les Etats-Unis ont d'abord affirmé qu'ils n'étaient pas liés par des « délais ou calendriers » imposés de l'extérieur avant de se dire, par la voix de leur ambassadeur auprès de l'Onu, « très attentifs à la tradition olympique ». Calendrier en main, experts, journalistes et diplomates en poste à Washington se livrent à de savants calculs.



Leith Chbeilat

« Nous n'avons pas de gouvernement »

Le roi garde sa confiance à Majali mais il a décidé de modifier la composition du cabinet. L'opposant public numéro 1 n'attend rien de ce remaniement. Pour lui, la nouvelle équipe sera tout aussi peu représentative des Jordanais.

Vendredi dernier, les forces de police sont intervenues à l'intérieur même de la vieille mosquée du royaume Al-Husseini pour empêcher le déroulement d'une manifestation en faveur de l'Irak. Bâtons, chiens et bombes lacrimogènes, le ministre de l'Intérieur n'a pas lésiné sur les moyens pour réduire ce mouvement spontané et populaire. Parmi les mani-

festants, un homme bien connu du grand public pour ses positions iconoclastes : Leith Chbeilat, président de la puissante Association professionnelle des ingénieurs, opposant déclaré au régime (fin 1996, il était gracié par le roi Hussein après sept mois de prison pour crime de lèse-majesté) et membre actif du comité jordanien pro-irakien.

La sale manie de Majali I

La fermeté du premier gouvernement Majali liée à la conjoncture politique régionale ? Le dérapage à la Mosquée Al-Husseini, marqué par la crise irakienne ? Les circonstances critiques actuelles peuvent en effet nous aider à comprendre la poigne des autorités.

Il n'en reste pas moins que cette politique de la manière forte a accompagné le gouvernement depuis son installation au Quatrième cercle. Déjà en avril de l'année dernière, le ministre de l'Intérieur avait donné l'ordre de détruire des maisons bâties par des villageois à Darar (la Vallée du Jourdain) sur des terrains d'Etat. Les contestataires (y compris un député) ont été poursuivis et humiliés. Une vingtaine de personnes a été arrêtée. Les gouvernements précédents préféraient traiter ce problème (à Zarqa, à Aqaba...) par la négociation.

En mai dernier, lorsque des journalistes ont voulu protester pacifiquement contre la loi provisoire sur la presse devant le siège du gouvernement, des renforts de police ont été dépêchés sur les lieux : des journalistes ont été frappés, des caméras cassées. La scène a été diffusée le soir à la télévision... sur CNN et d'autres chaînes internationales.

Octobre. Pendant la campagne des législatives, les forces de sécurité ont déchiré les banderoles de certains candidats. Des réunions électorales ont été interdites sans justification, sauf ce refrain éternel : « Pour raisons de sécurité ».

Il y a trois semaines, les pharmaciens désiraient protester contre l'assassinat à Amman de deux de leurs collègues et exiger une plus grande protection. La manifestation a été interdite purement et simplement.

Enfin, le ministre de l'Intérieur a empêché il y a peu la tenue d'une semaine culturelle organisée par le Club al-Watan à Russefeh (près de Zarqa). Raison invoquée : aucune. Ces quelques exemples et d'autres archivés par les organisations des droits de l'homme confirment que la répression dans la Mosquée Al-Husseini n'était pas un fait isolé.

Suleiman Sweiss

Le lendemain de la répression policière, Chbeilat réclamait la démission du gouvernement Majali. Il n'a pas été entendu mais le gouvernement a tout de même été profondément remanié. « C'est de la petite politique », répond l'ancien député qui a boycotté les élections législatives de novembre dernier, je n'ai même pas regardé les journaux ce matin pour voir quels étaient les changements. Selon lui, il ne faut donc rien attendre de Majali II. Les modifications apportées ne soulignent aucune volonté de modifier le cap : le ministre de l'Intérieur Nathir Rashid, pourtant sévèrement critiqué après les événements de vendredi, a été maintenu à son poste ; l'équipe ministérielle chargée de l'économie a été conservée ; les nouveaux venus sont tous des anciens ministres du gouvernement de 1993, dirigé déjà par Abdul Salam Majali. Seule

surprise : l'arrivée d'un islamiste indépendant, Bassam Oumouche. Qu'en pense Leith Chbeilat ? « Pour moi, ce n'est pas un islamiste, il est juste un leurre », commente-t-il à l'emporte-pièce, refusant de voir dans la promotion d'un ancien membre du Front d'action islamique un geste d'ouverture. « Le gouvernement Majali représente le lobby israélien, il ne reflète pas les aspirations des Jordanais », martèle-t-il encore.

Paradoxalement, Chbeilat rejoint le commentaire du Premier ministre qui a qualifié le remaniement de simple « routine ». Comme lui, il estime que cela n'a rien à voir avec la crise irakienne. « C'était attendu. Le roi considérait juste que certains ministres ne faisaient

pas bien leur travail », ou plus directement avec la répression de la Mosquée Al-Husseini. « Au contraire, indique Chbeilat, le roi n'aime pas l'agitation sous pression ». Et l'opposant numéro 1 d'enchaîner sur une série de réflexions concernant la monarchie qu'il nous est impossible de reproduire ici. Une phrase parmi d'autres, quand même : « Nous n'avons pas de gouvernement, nous n'avons qu'un cabinet municipal ». D'autres manifestations de soutien à l'Irak sont prévues aujourd'hui à Irbid et la semaine prochaine à Amman. Leith Chbeilat, cette fois, n'y participera pas. Il prétend être plus que jamais une cible des Moukhabarat.

Le Jourdain



Dans le bureau de Leith Chbeilat, cette photo tirée du quotidien Al-Arab Al-Yom. Plusieurs personnes ont été blessées au cours de l'intervention musclée des forces de police devant la mosquée.

Nouvelles du Pays

Natation

Poussée dans le grand bain

Hana Majaj a participé aux derniers championnats du monde de natation en Australie. Faute de préparation sérieuse, elle n'y a fait que de la figuration. Exemple d'une Jordanie sportive sans ambition.

La Jordanie a beau participer à de nombreuses compétitions internationales, elle ne parvient pas à faire illusion. Les moyens sont limités, les méthodes d'entraînement peu évoluées, et donc les résultats presque inexistantes. Question : les athlètes du royaume comptent-ils jamais parmi les sportifs professionnels ? On peut en douter quand on suit le parcours de Hana Majaj, une jeune Jordanienne aujourd'hui âgée de 18 ans. Elle est pourtant l'une des meilleures nageuses du pays. En 1997, lors des derniers Jeux Panarabes au Liban elle décroche la médaille de bronze au 200 mètres papillon en 2'32". L'année précédente, elle s'était déjà révélée au cours

du championnat panarabe de natation en Jordanie en établissant plusieurs records régionaux et en obtenant une médaille d'or et une d'argent. « L'année 96 marque vraiment les débuts officiels de la Jordanie dans la natation de haut niveau », explique Hana, pas seulement à cause de ses performances mais parce que c'est l'année de naissance de la Fédération jordanienne de natation. Une équipe nationale de 5 garçons et 3 filles est mise en place. Sports City devient le lieu d'entraînements réguliers : 6 jours par semaine, deux heures par jour. La Jordanie n'est donc qu'un bébé dans la natation mondiale. Elle est malgré tout invitée par la Fédération internationale à participer

aux championnats du monde de Perth en janvier dernier. Elle y envoie deux représentantes, Hana et Rania Ghosheh. « Prendre part aux championnats du monde, je ne m'y attendais pas surtout que je suis au début de ma carrière », confie Hana. Quelle pression sur ces jeunes épaules ! Pas du tout : « En réalité, je savais que je n'y allais que pour participer, avoue la nageuse, ma nomination pour ces championnats n'était qu'une sorte de récompense de la part du président de la Fédération ». Du coup, Hana a pris cette compétition comme un pari en pique-nique. « De toute façon, dit-elle, la Fédération ne s'attendait absolument à rien ». Il est vrai que la préparation n'a pas été à la

hauteur du niveau de la compétition : « En rentrant des Jeux Panarabes au Liban, les entraînements ont été arrêtés pendant trois mois car les lieux d'entraînements n'étaient pas disponibles et plusieurs étaient déjà fermés. On a repris début décembre à l'Université de Jordanie en attendant que la piscine de Sports City soit de nouveau ouverte. Pendant un mois, je me suis entraînée au rythme des horaires stricts de l'Université : insuffisant pour bien se préparer ». De plus ajoute Hana, l'entraîneur ne nous a pas accompagnées en Australie car la Fédération n'avait pas les moyens de lui payer le billet d'avion. Sur place, un entraîneur australien nous a été désigné.

Pas de surprise donc à Perth. La Jordanie a terminé parmi les nations les plus faibles du globe. Hana Majaj veut rester positive : « On a beaucoup profité de cette expérience. Nous nous sommes mis au courant des nouvelles méthodes d'entraînement, des équipements utilisés, des systèmes de nutrition suivis. Nous avons appris l'importance de la psychologie pour les athlètes et les moyens de se débarrasser après mais surtout avant la compétition. Ce sont tout un tas de techniques qu'on ne connaît pas en Jordanie ». Mais la route vers le professionnalisme risque encore d'être longue. La mère de Hana préfère ne pas attendre et veut envoyer sa fille dans une école de natation américaine car en Jordanie, dit-elle, « on ne peut rien faire ». Prochain grand objectif : les Jeux Olympiques de l'an 2000 à Sydney, où la Jordanie, malgré la devise de Coubertin, ne pourra se contenter de participer.

Rana Kavar-Bageen

Roxana : une intégration en or



Coffrée de cheveux de cuir australien, médaille d'or au poitrine, Roxana garde monter le drapeau français. Elle est championne du monde du 200 mètres dos.

Deux présidents de la République lui ont envoyé un message de félicitations. Jacques Chirac, au nom des Français, et Emil Constantinescu, le chef d'Etat roumain au nom de ses concitoyens. Mais c'est bien à la France que Roxana Marascu, 22 ans, sur 200 mètres dos, apporte son premier titre mondial de natation lors des championnats de Perth en Australie. En 2 minutes, 25 secondes, la nageuse roumaine, née à Mulhouse, a non seulement battu son propre record de France mais elle a surtout pulvérisé un cancan psychologique. A force d'échouer, la natation française, bredouille à Atlanta, désespérait de voir jamais une médaille.

d'or au bout d'un de ses doigts.

L'histoire de la jeune fille est l'un de ces rares miracles de l'athlétisme. Roxana, ses parents et son frère se sont installés en France en 1984, fuyant le régime de Ceausescu. Les premiers temps sont difficiles. Ils dorment pendant trois semaines dans leur voiture. Mais le père finit par trouver un emploi à Mulhouse.

Pour Roxana commence alors la vie d'une nageuse. Elle débute et s'entraîne d'intégration dans le club de natation de la ville de Mulhouse. Elle est entraînée par le père de la nageuse, qui est lui-même un ancien nageur de haut niveau. Elle fait ses débuts en natation à l'âge de 10 ans. Elle est sélectionnée pour les Jeux Olympiques de Barcelone en 1992. Elle y participe mais ne remporte aucune médaille. Elle continue à s'entraîner et à progresser. Elle est sélectionnée pour les Jeux Olympiques de Sydney en 2000.

Le Jourdain avec la contribution de magazines français

C'est la vie

L'agenda culturel d'Amman

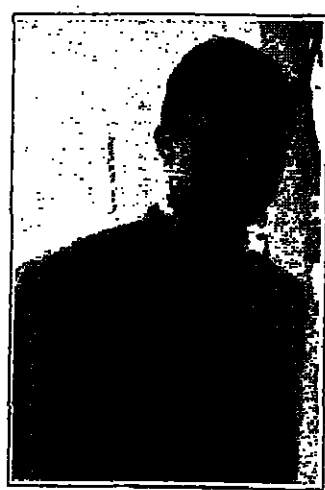
Exposition

C'est au XIXème siècle que la bande dessinée devient autonome et adopte le support que nous lui connaissons : l'album imprimé. Après avoir été sous domination américaine puis belge, la BD française fait preuve dans les années 1960 et 1970 d'une formidable créativité. Cette période coïncide avec l'émergence d'un mouvement hétéroclite qui milite pour la reconnaissance d'un 9ème Art. Quelques bulles et planches pour vous présenter l'histoire de la bande dessinée en France. Au Centre culturel français jusqu'au 26 février. Renseignements au 637009.



Télévision

« Allons en France 1998 ». Au départ, trente Jordanais de 16 à 20 ans. A la fin de l'année, les cinq meilleurs seulement partiront 15 jours en France pendant la Coupe du Monde. Jeu télé diffusé en direct et sous-titré en arabe ce jeudi 19 février de 18h30 à 20h00 sur la première chaîne.



Bernard Bajolet est l'Ambassadeur de France à Amman depuis quatre ans.

Cinéma

Cycle consacré au réalisateur Eric Rohmer. L'ami de mon amie (1987), sous-titré en arabe. Deux jeunes femmes, l'une attachée d'administration, l'autre informaticienne, se lient d'amitié. Pendant les vacances, leurs sentiments amoureux vont compliquer leurs relations. Lundi 23 février à 18h30 et 20h30 au CCF.

Conférence

Moi, Bernard Bajolet, Ambassadeur de France. A l'occasion d'une conférence au Centre culturel, l'Ambassadeur de France à Amman, Monsieur Bernard Bajolet, nous fera la visite guidée de sa fonction telle qu'il la vit au quotidien. Mardi 24 février à 18h30.



« L'entraîneur ne nous a pas accompagnées en Australie car la Fédération n'avait pas les moyens de lui payer le billet d'avion ». Hana Majaj, jeune espoir de la natation jordanienne.

مغامرة في البحر

Tess anato



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Tess heightens anatomy lesson

By Martin Miller

LOS ANGELES—At the new California Science Center here, size counts.

Like so many things in America's super-size culture, museum officials decided during design sessions a few years ago to convey a fairly complicated physiological concept by going large. Way large.

Thus was born Tess—a 50-foot, mostly anatomically correct woman whose transparent body helps demonstrate how the organs keep the body in balance. At various times throughout her 15-minute performance, audiences will see Tess' TV-sized heart beat, her stove-sized lungs pump, and her refrigerator-sized brain light up like a pinball machine.

"We could have gone with something human size and just stuck it on a podium. Or we could

have made her 20 feet, and that would have been kind of cool," said David J. Combs, the museum's life science curator. "But at 50 feet, she's going to be big and memorable."

Audiences of up to 120 at a time can gauge just how memorable Tess will be starting Saturday, when the exhibit debuts as part of the grand opening of the new Science Center. Tess—a friendly nickname for Test Dummy—is ideally intended for seventh-graders, but all school-age kids can enjoy the lively presentation.

Of course, when you're 50 feet tall, the thing that smirking seventh-graders want to know is, "Is everything to scale? You know, everything?"

Well, bad news for the hormone-happy: Tess is G-rated. But there's plenty of educational bells and whistles to keep kids and even adults charmed with Tess, who accounted for a fourth of the exhibit's \$7 million price tag. Despite her size, she moves remarkably well, especially for someone with a 6-foot head.

Through animatronics (the same thing that powers Abe Lincoln at Disneyland), her eyes blink, her face registers emotion, her finger taps, one of her 30-foot-long legs stretches out, and her arm raises 27 feet into the air. To draw attention to her "insides," Tess is outfitted with pulsating strobe and chaser lights that illuminate her circulatory, brain and nervous systems.

Actually, Tess's height is more a result of space and cost restrictions than any homage to the campy 1950s film "Attack of the 50-Foot Woman."

Although in earlier incarnations, Tess apparently appeared as hostile as her cinematic forbear. "She looked a little macabre," said Combs. "So we modified her a bit. We didn't want her to be a scary icon."

An audience's first glimpse of the kinder, gentler Tess will be inside a multimedia theater, which resembles a body workshop for test dummies.

There, Tess appears to be "relaxing in a lounge chair," Combs said.

The physiology lesson begins with Tess's cartoon sidekick Walt, the affable but bumbling maintenance man. Once Tess gets the talkative Walt "to put a sock in it," she explains how the body's organs regulate temperature, energy and oxygen during a soccer game.

The California Science Center (formerly the California Museum of Science and Industry) opens to the public Saturday after a \$130 million expansion.

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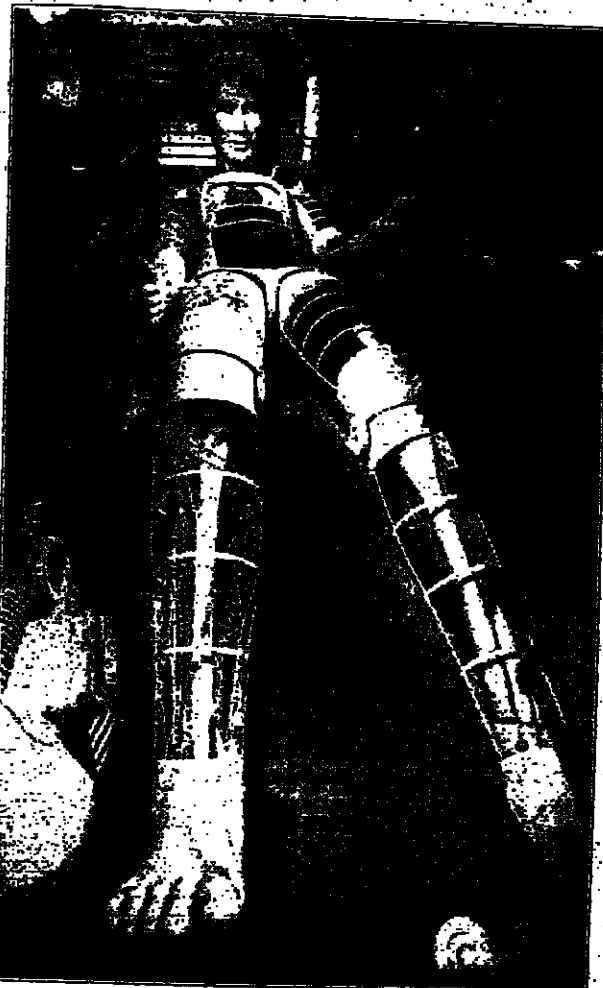
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The California Science Center (formerly the California Museum of Science and Industry) opens to the public Saturday after a \$130 million expansion.



Tess, all 50 feet of her, relaxes at the new California Science Center in Los Angeles. Photo by Wally Skelly.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

'Four Days in September': Radically wise

By Stephen Hunter

DURING WORLD War II, the army helpfully explained something to those going into battle: "In combat, confusion is normal." And in a sense, that's exactly what the small, brilliant Brazilian film "Four Days in September," which has just been nominated for an Oscar, is all about. Its young soldiers believe ardently in the goodness of their cause, train hard and come up with enterprising tactics, but once the real thing starts ... hel-lo, nothing makes sense.

It's not an ambush, an assault, even a patrol, for theirs is a battle of urban guerrilla warfare, or an act of terrorism, depending on your politics. It's a kidnapping. But imagine the mix-up in their young minds when they discover that they like the man they've kidnapped but they hate the man who's leading them!

The setting is Rio, September 1969, and radical conformism is the flavor of the year. That guy mouthing pieties as he bounces on the surface of the moon in his white suit, he just makes the romantic young members of the revolutionary action group MR-8 nuts!

How can he talk of a giant leap for mankind when American-kind is busy frying people in Vietnam and at the same time supporting the military junta that has taken over Brazil?

In their hunger for palpable enemies, and their hero-worship of saintly essences of purification like Che and Ho, they chose the United States as their devil. One of the great things about "Four Days in September" is that the director, Bruno Barreto, who based his film on the kidnapping of US Ambassador Charles Burke Elbrick, understands how much of revolutionary fervor is really just horseplay.

These kids want to fight and help, but in their training they remain complete bourgeois amateurs, unable to get much beyond the concept of mischief. Ordered not to look at a hidden leader, they peek. They keep forgetting their revolutionary noms de guerre. It all seems so silly. Fernando (Pedro Cardoso), a former college radical, is the smartest of them but also the most hapless. With his gun, he's more a danger to his comrades than the army.



But it's Fernando who comes up with an idea that's astounding by the standards of 1969: to kidnap the US ambassador and hold him against the release of political prisoners. The idea is so good that two professionals are sent from headquarters to take over the operation. One of them is the surly little Jonas (Matheus Nachtergaele), whom the kids come to hate. A rural peasant, he's got the hooded eyes and dynamic will of a seasoned NCO. He doesn't want to palaver, he wants to operate; he doesn't require idealism, he requires obedience. If they don't obey, he claims, he'll kill them. He's everything they think they hate: authority, anger, rigidity. He's their fathers, for crying out loud.

The US ambassador, by contrast, is everything they love: a sensitive liberal, a man of refinement and courage, an empathetic listener who wants to understand them. He's them, grown to elegant middle age, as well

played by Alan Arkin. That dynamic really drives the film and provides a surprise, given the deadpan documentary style of the piece—its subtlety of grace and humor.

In fact, Barreto's humanism and wisdom is such that he's reluctant to ascribe evil even to the most nominally evil of characters, the secret policeman. As played by Marco Ricca, our professional torturer even has a soul. He can torture, but it haunts his sleep, corrupts his sex life, drives him ever onward in obedience to that stern mistress, Duty. He is driven to recover the ambassador over the four days. But while reality is occasionally a better author than any member of the Writers Guild, it's not in this case.

"Four Days in September" is strictly fact-based (it's derived from a memoir by the real-life Fernando, now a Brazilian politician), which means that where any hack would

have finished it off with a commando raid, a screaming confrontation, a twist of vicious irony, Barreto sticks to reality. The facts are much less dramatic.

Still—and best of all—"Four Days in September" is more a narrative document than a political one. It penetrates the self-righteousness of so much political rhetoric, and movingly displays the emotions of the event, adroitly sidestepping the tidy if fallacious caricatures that seem almost always to accompany this sort of film when directed by a Costa-Gavras, Barreto has the wisdom—and the guts—to see humanity on both sides of the barricade.

"Four Days in September" (113 minutes) is rated R for mild violence and a sexual situation of seduction. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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THE STAR'S WORKSTATION COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NOTES

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies!

Welcome to The Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. Fax us on 648298 or email us at Star@NETS.com.Jo with your news and views.

Virus scanners rise to 'network' challenges

WITH THE growth of specialized environments of computing—such as networks, groupware and electronic mail environments—there has been a growing need for virus protection software that can tackle newly developed virus programs that attack such environments.

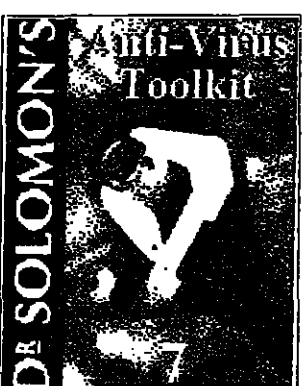
The major producers of anti-virus software are introducing products to challenge these developments and it seems that these new products should be able to fight back against the new onslaught of viruses.

Dr. Solomon Anti-Virus release 7.1 is specifically designed to counter viruses in network computing environments such as Lotus Domino and Lotus Notes. It also incorporates advanced protection measures for Windows NT workstations.

Of course, Dr. Solomon Anti-Virus still takes care of most other viruses, and includes an upgraded and comprehensive database of all the latest 'computer germs and nasties'.

Symantec has introduced new versions of its popular Norton series of Anti-Virus programs, which run under all Windows environments but focus on protecting worksta-

tion and server software. Norton Anti-Virus 4.0 is easy to use, as it takes the user through a series of steps, upon the detection of a virus, to eliminate it. What's more, the com-



prehensive 'search and detect' facilities of the software can handle viruses spread through e-mail attachments and specifically target viruses that accompany macros of software packages like Lotus Notes and Microsoft Exchange.

Another product, called Guard Dog Deluxe from CyberMedia provides automatic protection against viral components found in Internet software

and applications such as Java applets and ActiveX software.

This advanced virus detector and killer can even clean up the trail left by your Internet sessions, so it also battles Internet 'cookies' designed to track down your e-mail address and store.

Also, from Computer Associates (CA), comes the latest Inoculan Anti Virus for Windows 95, which protects Novell Netware, Windows NT and OS/2 computer networks.

Panda Anti-Virus for Windows 95, from Panda Software, adds to these talents the ability to scan compressed files (such as Zip files) and incorporates scan methods that enable the detection of new viruses which cannot be recognized by typical virus scanners. It includes an information database on more than 13,000 viruses!

The new generation of virus scanners should better protect computer users in an age when our growing dependence on information requires stronger safeguards against the hazards of 'unfriendly' saboteurs. Being armed with one of these scanner your best chance of safe network computing and continued smooth Internet surfing.

COMDEX comes to Egypt, in May

COMDEX, the famous name in computer and information technology exhibitions is coming to the region, with the first COMDEX event being held in Cairo from 23 to 26 May, 1998.

COMDEX Egypt '98 is a major computer, telecommunications and office equipment exhibition that will include a large number of participating companies and is expected to draw tens of thousands of visitors to the

Cairo International Conference Center. Under the slogan of a 'Big Potential Market, with a Bigger share of the action, and some of the Biggest names, at one of the

world's Biggest trade show titles!" For more information, contact IIR Exhibitions Ltd., telephone (971 4) 365161, fax (971 4) 364006, P.O. Box 28943, UAE. ■



Digital Subscriber Lines (DSL) arrive

THE FUTURE of Internet and data communications lies in Digital Subscriber Lines, which are expected to be widespread in the next five years.

The collection of high speed technologies, known as DSL, promise superfast Internet access—up to 160 times as fast as with 56Kbps modems, depending on the type of DSL technology.

Because DSL works with existing copper telephone wires, it requires less upgrad-

ing of telephone company networks than the other broadband solutions.

It is expected that Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Lines (ADSL) hold the best potential, because they don't require a whole new infrastructure.

A quick comparison shows that can provide up to 1 Mbps of data speed (away from the user) and up to 8Mbps towards the user. Compare that to the humble

56Kbps (0.056 MBps) we have today with typical modems and you can appreciate the power of ADSL.

In any case, DSL technologies will be more prevalent in businesses, than in homes, simply due to the fact that DSL-ready modems will not be cheaper than the analogue modems of today.

DSL offers much faster access than both conventional modems and ISDN. ■

News update

New hard drives from Seagate

● Seagate, a leader in hard disks and storage technologies, announced a number of developments in its range of top selling hard disks.

Most prominent in these developments is the ability of Seagate's latest drives to function at speeds of up to 10,000 cycles a minute.



meaning that wait-time for computer users will be highly reduced.

By adding this development to expanded storage in lower end models, reaching as high as 9.1 GigaByte for its Cheta models, Seagate looks set to inject more power into its already varied line of products which includes the Ultra ATA drives, ranging in storage from 2.1 to 8.6, and Seagate's giant Barracuda line of drives for workstations and servers, capable of storing 18 GigaBytes.

Arabic Translator from ATA Software

● Software development company ATA introduced

version 3.0 of its Arabic Translation that includes a comprehensive dictionary, with local terms and dialects taken into consideration.

It also comes with an Arabic Optical Character Recognition software, that functions under Windows 95.

It provides ease-of-use, through an Arabic/English user interface.

ATA Software also produces other innovative products, such as 'Al Nake' which is a program that allows the computer to vocally read Arabic and English texts.

For more information on ATA Software products in Jordan, contact telephone number 865296.

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

A call for consumer rights on the Internet

THE ISSUES of privacy on the Internet are a growing concern. Apart from the ongoing debate regarding security aspects as far as financial transactions are concerned, another major aspect is emerging which requires certain consumer protection measures.

Personal information about Internet users is becoming easy to collect, or maybe even steal, due to software implementations known as 'cookies'.

What these 'cookies' do is store e-mail addresses of users who log into certain Internet sites, and accordingly utilize this information to bombard the users with endless junk-mail. Once you enter certain sites, the operators of these sites have the capability to target you with messages, and you are simply powerless to stop this theft of your e-mail address.

Consumer protectionists and advocates of user rights to privacy are speaking up against such marketing tactics. Cookies are turning the Internet into a somewhat unsafe roaming ground, and it seems that this matter is mounting the pressure on regulatory authorities to have a say in what Internet site operators can or cannot do.

Some operators of sites have adopted measures to counter this sentiment among users, by providing users with the option to allow the sites to store address information, while other operators of Internet sites continue to grab addresses of every visitors without heading to the cries of consumers. There is a need to spread more and more awareness among users regarding such underhanded tactics. If all parties concerned want to make sure that marketing products and services on the Internet grows; they have to make the Internet a safer place for consumers. ■

Web Design services will dwindle

IT STARTED to emerge as a beneficial line of business in 1996, and probably peaked sometime in 1997, and is expected to continue into 1998, eventually beginning to decline soon.

What I'm talking about is Web design and development services, which witnessed an explosion in Jordan over the past couple of years; mainly due to the fact that every major or medium size corporations, organization or company wants to build its site on the World Wide Web. Accordingly, Web design and development firms flourished in Jordan, offering varied services to different classes of customers.

The result, today, is a somewhat 'messy' situation, by which you could receive offers starting from JD 350 all the way up to JD 1,500 for the same basic Web site, with an average of 5 pages. Web development companies with a real vision realize that Web design will decline in the future due to the fact that most potential customers are learning how to 'do it themselves' or are hiring in-house developers to cut down on the costs involved.

The real future potential lies in Internet programming and software services. Search engines, Internet security software and all sorts of software 'gizmos' that facilitate your Internet usage are going to be in demand. Intelligent Arabic Internet experts better be hard at work on developing Arabized or Arabic-sensitive software to serve those purposes. The information super-highway doesn't include any stops. If you're not fast enough, you'll end up in the slow lane! ■

Global One is the pioneering provider of full Internet services in Jordan

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Japan clinches gold after record leaps

HAKUBA, Japan—Takanobu Okabe, and Masahiko Harada glided to the longest jumps in Olympic history as Japan finally captured the team ski jumping gold that slipped from its hands four years ago in Lillehammer.

It was the eighth medal of the Nagano Games for Japan — its biggest haul ever at a Winter Games. Germany won the silver Tuesday and Austria the bronze.

Since the 1994 games, Harada had been famous for one of the biggest flops in Olympic history. Now he will be remembered for the way he sobbed joyously after a gold medal performance that firmly banished the Lillehammer demons.

As if setting up a storybook ending, Harada had one of the worst jumps of the first round. The Japanese team slumped to fourth at the half-way mark and appeared on the verge of another collapse, this time before 50,000 of their own



Japani ski jumping team

fans, including the emperor's daughter, Norinomiya. After Okabe shot to an

Olympic record 137 meters to put Japan in front again, Harada went to the top of the hill for his second jump.

Shrugging off past flops, the 120-meter bronze medalist powered down the slope and stayed aloft until the hill began to straighten out at 135 meters.

Although he almost sat down on his landing and lost style points, his leap had to be hand-measured because it exceeded the electronic markers. The crowd erupted when the scoreboard flashed 137 meters.

"I did it. I did it," Harada said later as tears rolled down his cheeks. "All four of us worked together and got the gold. We helped each other. Everyone was the best."

"It wasn't me," he continued, in between sobs. "It was all the teammates. The spectators all worked hard, too."

Harada was already bawling as he was hugged by Okabe and Hiroya Saito after his jump, which increased Japan's lead to 25 points.

After Andreas Widhoelzl's 136.5-meter leap guaranteed the Austrians a medal, Ger-

many's Dieter Thoma had to come up with a record-breaker to deny the Japanese, but he managed only 120 meters.

Kazuyoshi Funaki, the 120m individual gold medalist and probably the most consistent and reliable jumper around, was in his usual perfect form Tuesday. His distance of 125 meters gave Japan the title by more than 35 points.

Japan wound up with 933 points, while Germany had 897.4 and Austria 881.5. It was sheer glory for Harada.

The 29-year-old jumper should have clinched the gold at Lillehammer in 1994 but jumped far too short on the final round, giving Germany the title.

At one stage, it looked bad for him here too. In a heavy snowfall and tough wind conditions, Harada managed only 79.5 meters in his first jump, and the Japanese team went into the second round trailing Austria, Germany and Norway.

Okabe brought them back with an amazing leap of 137. That beat the 136 meters Harada had jumped in Sunday's 120m individual event,

and put the Japanese atop the Germans again.

After Germany's Martin Schmitt threatened the Japanese lead with a jump of 126.5, Saito maintained the advantage with a leap of 124, although the Japanese were only 3.2 points ahead halfway through the second round.

Harada's 137 ensured Funaki a big edge going into his final jump — and the 120-meter champion didn't let the team and the fans down.

Amid the wild celebrations at the finish line, the 22-year-old Funaki dived headlong into the crowd and was mobbed by the Japanese fans.

"I had goose bumps," he said. "It's the best Olympics ever."

But even in his bliss, he was able to sympathize with Harada's burden.

"Now I know how Harada felt in the last Olympics," said Funaki, expressing how it felt to jump last.

"I felt enormous pressure on my entire body, really. But the result was the gold. It's great."

NAGANO, Japan—The gold medal would have been special no matter who the United States beat. That it came against Canada made it perfect.

With 21 saves from Sarah Tueting and aggressive, intelligent play, the U.S. team defeated Canada 3-1 Tuesday to capture the first Olympic women's hockey title.

Four times since 1990, the Americans fell to the Canadians in the Women's World Championship. And in the months leading up to the Olympics, the rivals played 13 times with Canada winning seven.

"Canada's always had the edge ... but throughout the tournament we gained confidence," the United States' Sara DeCosta said. "We played them so many times, got to know them so well, we knew we could beat them."

And after they did, in the most important game of all, they celebrated like only champions do.

After Sandra Whyte scored into an empty net with eight seconds left to clinch it, Tueting leaped into the air and kicked up her heavily padded legs in a funky celebratory dance.

At the buzzer, sticks and gloves flew skyward as the U.S. team emptied the bench and mobbed Tueting. Defenseman Angela Ruggeri skated the length of the ice to grab the puck from the Canadian end, then threw her helmet in the air as alternate captain Karyn Bye wrapped a flag around herself.

The Canadians were left to stand glumly on the ice with bronze medalist Finland, waiting while the U.S. players went into their locker room.

"When you see it's silver," Canada captain Stacy Wilson said, "it kind of kicks your butt."

Canadian coach Shannon Miller said she felt "empty," but said her feelings changed when she saw the gold medal going around the neck of U.S. captain Cammi Granato.

"I had a feeling of joy go through my body because I realized an Olympic gold medal was being hung on a female hockey player," Miller said, "and I couldn't believe the impact it had on me."

Of the U.S.-Canada rivalry, she said, "I guess the gap's been closed." It was the second time the Americans defeated their rivals in four days, providing the United States its first Olympic hockey gold medal since the men's team pulled off the Miracle on Ice in 1980.

Before the game, Bye received a note from Bill Baker, a member of the '80 squad and a player Bye emulated as an 8-year-old. Baker wore No. 6, Bye's number.

"Good luck," the note read. "I'll be watching you go for the gold."

Bye led the parade out of the locker room

for the medal ceremony, fists clenched over her head, then hugged Granato as their teammates lined up on either side of Tueting.

The U.S. women, who went 6-0 during the Olympics and outscored their opponents 36-3, held hands while waiting for their gold medals and waved small American flags.

"We were talking about who was going to be on the Wheaties box," U.S. forward Alana Blahoski said. "We were told it was going to be Picabo Street or us. Why not us?"

On Saturday, the United States rallied from a 4-1 third-period deficit to win 7-4 in a game filled with penalties and skirmishes. This time, there was less physical play and more end-to-end action as Tueting and Canadian goalie Manon Rheaume traded outstanding saves.

The Americans were assessed only eight penalty minutes, the Canadians just six.

The U.S. team, which took 30 minutes in penalties Saturday to Canada's 18, worked on its penalty killing in practice Monday and kept Canada without a shot on two second-period power plays.

The most contentious moment came in the first period when Canada's Karen Nystrom tried to dislodge the puck from under Tueting and was shoved back by U.S. defenseman Chris Bailey.

Gretchen Ulton, frustrated on one point-blank shot in the scoreless first period, made good 2 1/2 minutes into the second, taking Whyte's pass from the corner and slapping a shot from the right circle past Rheaume.

Shelley Looney made it 2-0 midway through the third, deflecting Whyte's shot by Rheaume.

Danielle Goyette scored with 4:01 to play to pull Canada within a goal, but then Whyte scored into an empty net.

"It's a silver medal at the Olympics. I can't be upset with that," Canada's Judy Diduck said. "The experience of being here was tremendous. We just didn't have the legs for two periods. In the third period, we got started but it was too late."

The Canadians didn't perform as well as expected in Japan. They were good enough to beat the four inferior teams, but could no longer keep the resolute Americans from surpassing them.

"They know us, we know them," Blahoski said. "There were not a lot of tricks left to pull."

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